

The RED BOOK Magazine

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Has written for the next—the February—issue of this magazine another poignant story of the relations between a father and his son. The word "another" is employed, because of the fact that one of the really great stories of a few years back, "Not Wanted," was written by Mr. Williams on a similar theme. So infrequently, however, does the name of Mr. Williams appear in the magazines that when it does, it is a cause for rejoicing on the part of readers. You will not soon forget

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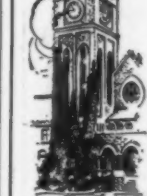
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He didn't understand a word of English, as he stood on a New York dock. His equipment for success was \$35.00—and a toothbrush.

Today he's an officer of the grain exchange, director in the local building and loan association, president of an ice cream company, and general manager of one of the largest co-operative creameries in the world.

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The really interesting thing is that there's nothing unusual or startling or extraordinary in the plan Mr. Norgaard followed.

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You are eager to get ahead—you will find it of vital importance to learn more of the success-methods James C. Norgaard and thousands of others have employed so profitably. We have therefore prepared a special 64-page booklet which outlines these methods in detail. It also points out the big opportunities in the field you are in or wish to enter—shows you how you can fit yourself to get them.

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My first job, in a Wisconsin grocery, paid me \$10 a month and board. At night school, in Green Bay, I learned English.

In the winter of 1915, I came to Chicago with LaSalle Extension University. From 1919 to 1921 I pursued LaSalle training in Business Management, and to this day I attribute most of my success to the training I received. As without the knowledge and inspiration it gave me, I am sure I could not have attained the position I now hold.

Naturally I am enthusiastic about LaSalle Training, and do not hesitate to say that any man who is eager to go ahead in business will find it the most profitable investment he ever made.

Very truly yours,

James C. Norgaard
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WATCH YOUR THROAT!



The warning signal

MORE serious illnesses than you can count on the fingers of both hands start with the warning signal, an irritated throat.

A tickle in your throat is nature's way of saying "Lookout—Danger ahead: the bacteria are getting the upper hand!" Naturally, too, for the throat is the open door for infection. It is the ideal breeding place for disease germs.

And in spite of this, so many of us neglect throat protection! A good, healthy body will be able to throw off the attacks of many bacteria, but very often the human system is not in the proper condition to fight them back.

When you think of your throat in this way, it seems amazing that more people do not take the proper precaution against illnesses that start with throat infection. Particularly, when the safe antiseptic, Listerine, is as near at hand as any corner drug store.

Be on the safe side these winter days. Use Listerine regularly as a mouth wash and gargle.

Also, then, you will be on the polite side with regard to that insidious condition, halitosis (unpleasant breath). — Lambert Pharmaceutical Co., St. Louis, U. S. A.

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G E N E R A L M O T O R S



The Burden Bearers

By Angelo Patri

Decoration by Franklin Booth

"**O**LD John Henry is a plain donkey, a burden-bearer for the rest of them. He's never had a day's freedom these forty years or more. He's looked after them all, ever since he could walk. Why in the world doesn't the man cut loose and let them all shift for themselves?"

Because John Henry belongs to the order of burden-bearers. Every sixth one among us is elected to that order; and once elected, it is no more possible to ignore a neighbor's load than it is for the neighbor to keep from shifting the burden to the stronger back.

I too have known John Henry for forty years or more, but I would be slow to say that he has never known freedom. His is the freest soul I know. When other lads were worrying about back lessons, bad marks, doubtful promotions, John Henry was smilingly licking the point of his stubby pencil and earnestly endeavoring to make clear to "Micky, the dumb ox," the mystery of the given triangle. Strong and serene and sure, John Henry was always free, always ready to lend his strength to the nearest one needing it.

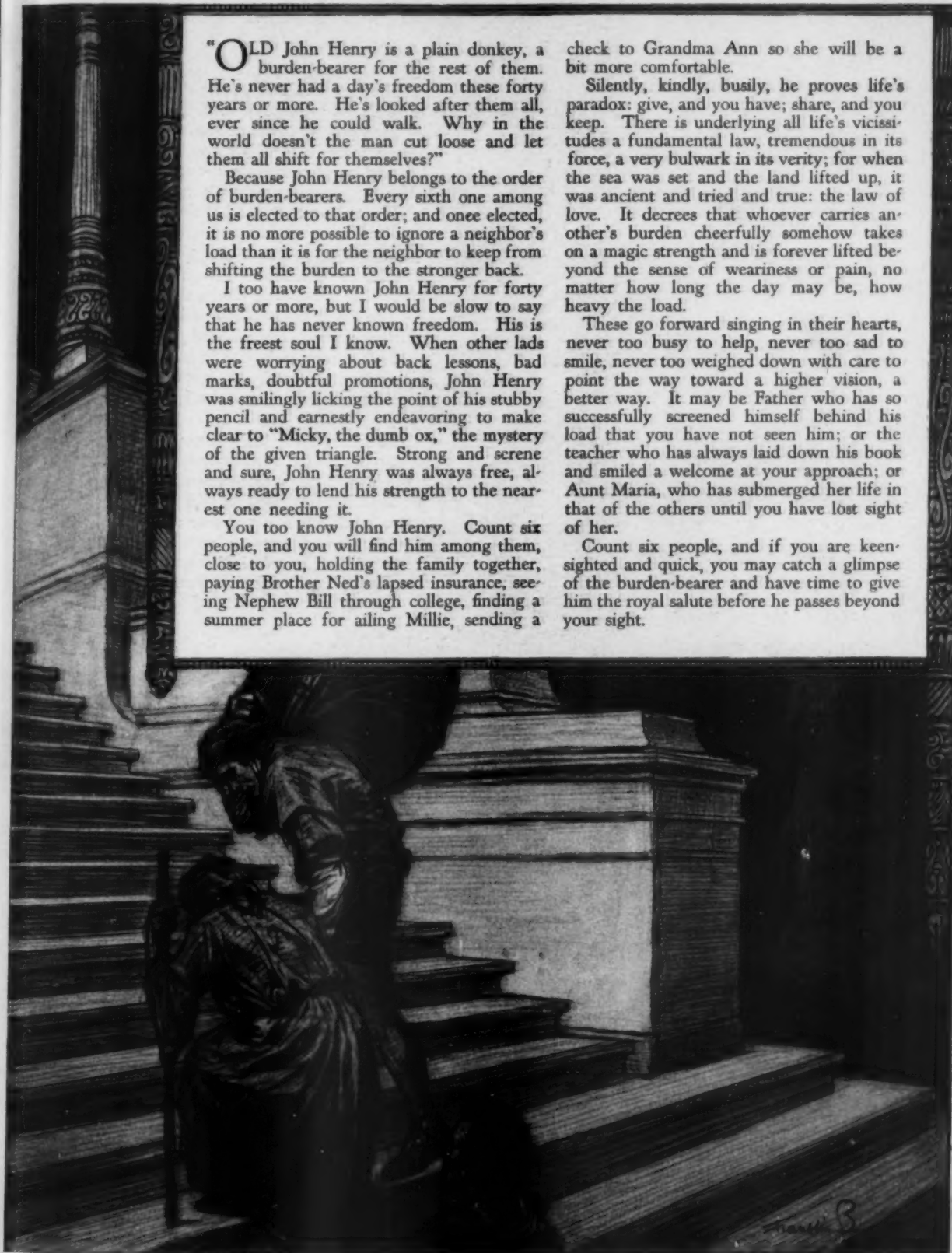
You too know John Henry. Count six people, and you will find him among them, close to you, holding the family together, paying Brother Ned's lapsed insurance, seeing Nephew Bill through college, finding a summer place for ailing Millie, sending a

check to Grandma Ann so she will be a bit more comfortable.

Silently, kindly, busily, he proves life's paradox: give, and you have; share, and you keep. There is underlying all life's vicissitudes a fundamental law, tremendous in its force, a very bulwark in its verity; for when the sea was set and the land lifted up, it was ancient and tried and true: the law of love. It decrees that whoever carries another's burden cheerfully somehow takes on a magic strength and is forever lifted beyond the sense of weariness or pain, no matter how long the day may be, how heavy the load.

These go forward singing in their hearts, never too busy to help, never too sad to smile, never too weighed down with care to point the way toward a higher vision, a better way. It may be Father who has so successfully screened himself behind his load that you have not seen him; or the teacher who has always laid down his book and smiled a welcome at your approach; or Aunt Maria, who has submerged her life in that of the others until you have lost sight of her.

Count six people, and if you are keen-sighted and quick, you may catch a glimpse of the burden-bearer and have time to give him the royal salute before he passes beyond your sight.



Personality

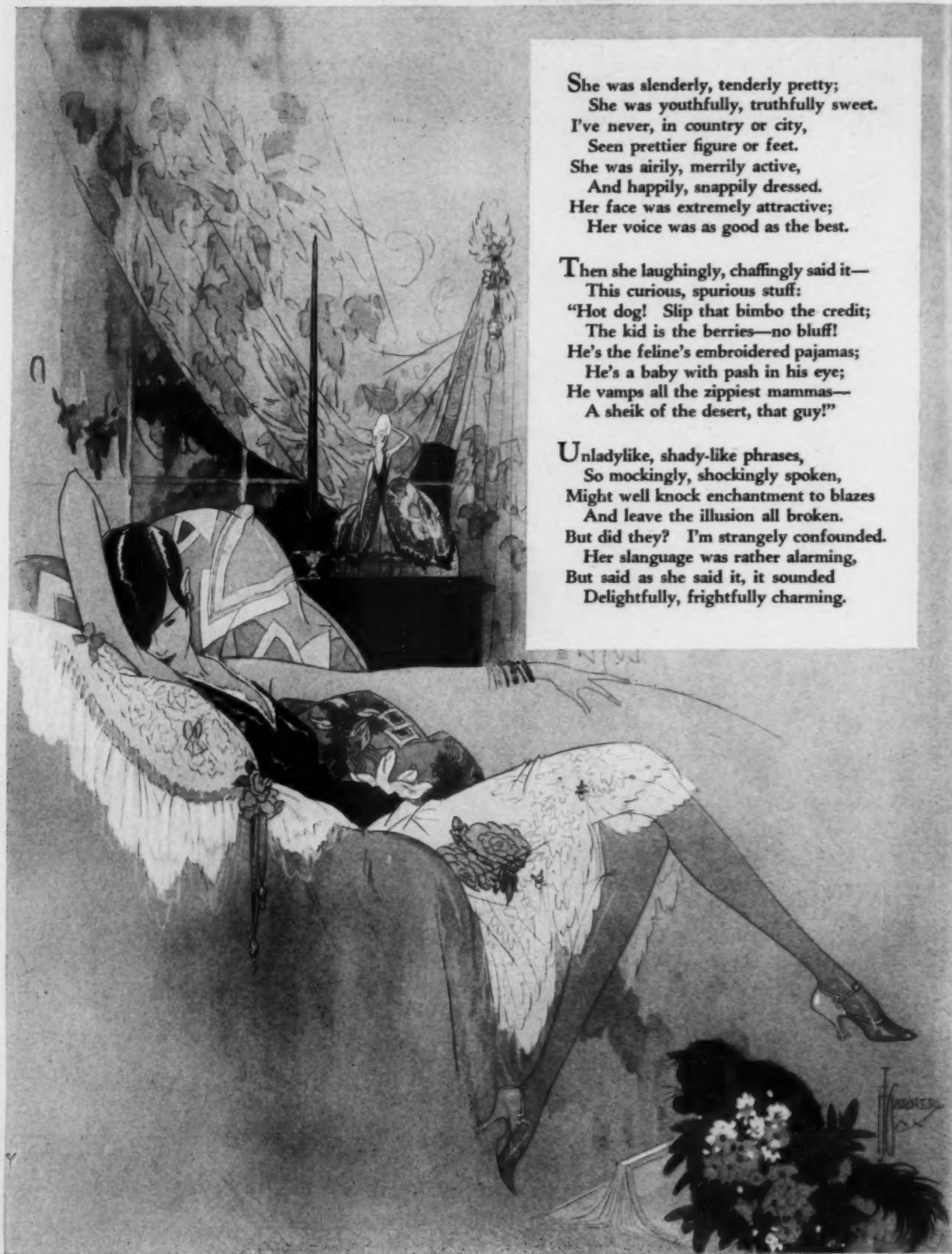
By Berton Braley

Decoration by
Frederick J. Garner

She was slenderly, tenderly pretty;
She was youthfully, truthfully sweet.
I've never, in country or city,
Seen prettier figure or feet.
She was airily, merrily active,
And happily, snappily dressed.
Her face was extremely attractive;
Her voice was as good as the best.

Then she laughingly, chaffingly said it—
This curious, spurious stuff:
"Hot dog! Slip that bimbo the credit;
The kid is the berries—no bluff!
He's the feline's embroidered pajamas;
He's a baby with pash in his eye;
He vamps all the zippiest mammas—
A sheik of the desert, that guy!"

Unladylike, shady-like phrases,
So mockingly, shockingly spoken,
Might well knock enchantment to blazes
And leave the illusion all broken.
But did they? I'm strangely confounded.
Her slanguage was rather alarming,
But said as she said it, it sounded
Delightfully, frightfully charming.





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with a more radiant tone*

— a more ravishing texture —

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Through the Years—

Don't let your youth slip away—start now by preserving it in this simple way that has proved to thousands that one need never be “middle-aged”—Unless she chooses

YOUTH is charm, and youthlost is charm lost, as every woman instinctively realizes.

To keep youth, keep the skin clean and the pores open. Banish artificial ways in skin care. Natural ways are best.

Use soap, but be sure it is a soap made basically for use on the face. Others may prove harsh. That is why, largely on expert advice, women the world over choose Palmolive for facial use.

THE art of never growing old is the art of preserving youth in *natural* ways. Which means, correct skin care every day of one's life.

That is the prescription of Youth, according to the foremost skin specialists of the day . . . and the habit of the modern woman. Youth *can* be preserved. Scores of thousands of women are doing it; scores of them your own acquaintances.

The rule starts with proper cleansing of the skin and pores with bland and gentle soap—with Palmolive and its gentle olive and palm lather used in this way.

Do this regularly and particularly at night

Wash your face gently with soothing Palmolive Soap, massaging the lather softly into the skin. Rinse thoroughly, first with warm water, then with cold. If your skin is inclined to be dry, apply a touch of good cold cream—that is all. Do this regularly, and particularly in the evening. Use powder and rouge if you wish.

But never leave them on over night. They clog the

pores, often enlarge them. Blackheads and disfigurements often follow. They must be washed away.

Avoid this mistake

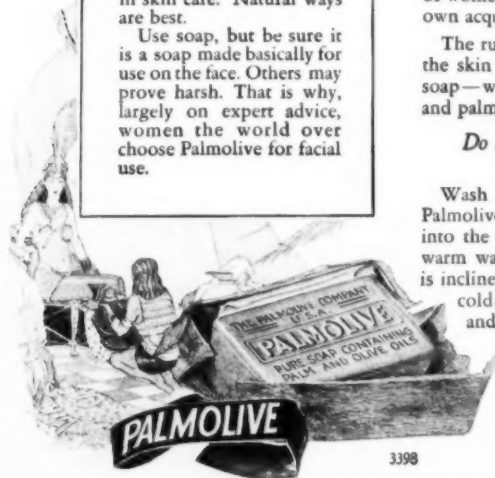
Do not use ordinary soaps in the treatment given above. Do not think any green soap, or one represented as of olive and palm oils, is the same as Palmolive.

And it costs but 10c the cake! So little that millions let it do for their bodies what it does for their faces. Obtain a cake today. Then note what an amazing difference one week makes.

Soap from trees!

The only oils in Palmolive Soap are the soothing beauty oils from the olive tree, the African palm, and the coconut palm—and no other fats whatsoever. That is why Palmolive Soap is the natural color that it is—for palm and olive oils, nothing else, give Palmolive its natural green color.

The only secret to Palmolive is its exclusive blend—and that is one of the world's priceless beauty secrets.



Palmolive Soap is untouched by human hands until you break the wrapper—it is never sold unwrapped

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The RED BOOK Magazine

January 1927 • Volume XLVIII • Number 3

KARL EDWIN HARRIMAN, Editor

A COMMON-SENSE EDITORIAL

Visitors

By BRUCE BARTON

ONE reason why I do not think I shall ever retire from business is because I don't want to become a visitor.

The visitor is the loveliest fellow in the world when you meet him on the golf-links or at home, but his advent into the office is like a plague of seventeen-year locusts.

He "just happened to be in the neighborhood" and thought he would drop in. He hasn't "seen you for a long time and just wondered how you were getting along." So he sits and talks while you fidget in your chair and try not to look at the pile of unfinished work on your desk.

The biographies of hard workers are full of sad complaint about him. Robert Boyle printed an advertisement in the newspapers at the suggestion of his physician, desiring "to be excused from receiving visits (unless upon occasions very extraordinary) two days in the week, namely, on the forenoons of Tuesdays and Fridays (both foreign post days) and on Wednesdays and Saturdays in the afternoons, that he may have some time, both to recruit his spirits, to arrange his papers, and to take some care of his affairs in Ireland, which are very much disordered."

Montesquieu, when engaged on his masterpiece, wrote to a friend: "The favor which your friend Mr. Hein does me to pass the mornings with me, occa-

sions great damage to my work, as well by his impure French as the length of his details."

I have always remembered a business call on Admiral Samuel McGowan, who had charge of all the purchases for the navy during the war. There was one chair in his office, and in that chair he sat. Those who came to sell him goods stood up; or if the matter involved more extended negotiation, the Admiral rang for an attendant who brought in a chair and removed it promptly when the business was done.

Most of us, being sellers, cannot operate that way, and we should not care to if we could, for life is more than business. But I sometimes wonder how much progress would be made if we let each other alone in the mornings, confining our visits to the afternoons. Or if one week a month were national Stay at Home Week, when everybody just sat tight.

It is the *untimeliness* of visits that slows up the wheels, and gives good men high blood-pressure. Job had a succession of troubles: his crops were destroyed, his wife was a fool, his house burned down, and he broke out with boils. But worst of all were the three smug visitors who came to comfort him when the only comfort he needed was to be left alone. They were the final straw.



Give *Whitman's*

The Candy Everybody Wants!

Whitman's alone cater to individual tastes in chocolates and confections.

By taking a little thought you can pay the real compliment of giving an assortment that will exactly suit the taste of the person who receives it.

Packages of known quality—names made household words all through the land because they stand for definite candy tastes, each package having an individuality and an appeal all its own.

Write for our illustrated descriptive circular and order form which will simplify your Christmas shopping, and enable you to make your candy gifts each a personal choice.

At the Whitman agency near you are all the Whitman packages, in special Christmas wraps and bands—Sampler, Pleasure Island, Salmagundi, Cloisonné, Bonnybrook Milk Chocolates, The Fussy Package, Nuts Chocolate Covered, Chocolate Covered Fruits and Nuts, the Wonderbox and others.

Every package of Whitman's is shipped direct to Whitman sales agents everywhere and doubly guaranteed.

Examine also the fancy holiday containers for Whitman's—unusual and beautiful boxes, baskets and chests.

STEPHEN F. WHITMAN & SON, Inc., Philadelphia
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WONDERBOX—Selected candies for children. Boxes show twelve different wonder-tales. Sold singly or by the set.

A FUSSY PACKAGE—Nut combination, nut and chew-y centers. Special Christmas bands.

SALMAGUNDI—A "medley of good things" in chocolates packed in charming metal box, banded for Christmas.

CHOCOLATE COVERED FRUITS AND NUTS—Richness and luxury.

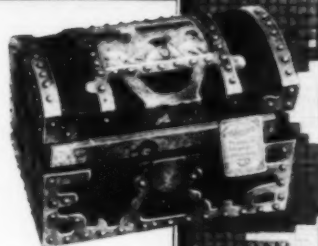
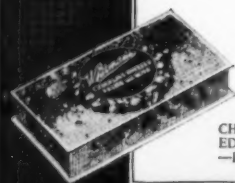
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"I am a good woman; I have only been foolish." Moran knew that the game was near its end.

The Fiddle String

By Harold Mac Grath

During the summer past Mr. Mac Grath covered again old trails cut by him many years ago in France. Lourdes and its shrine lured him, as it had before, and thither he went at the time of the great pilgrimage. From the experience sprang this memorable story, which in all its spiritual essentials may be accepted as true.

Illustrated by Dudley Gloyne Summers

WE all have one—a fiddle-string; and Fate plays queer tunes upon it. The emotional in us: some of us have a good grip on it, and some of us have none at all. There is no back-stop to it; Fate strikes us from all angles, comically or tragically. Most of the troubles on this lopsided earth of ours are due to uncontrolled emotions. Once upon a time five hundred emotional women chased Paderewski off the concert stage, and half an hour later forgot all about the "Ballade in F Minor." An effervescent, evanescent thing, quickly becoming flat and stale. Today you and I weep as we watch the boys who once fought in France parade up the avenue; tomorrow we shall forget all about them. Generally, then, of itself it means nothing—this fiddle-string. But it is appalling, the vibrations it gives off. . . .

Moran stepped out from his room upon the little iron balcony and let his glance rove up and down the Rue de Rivoli, at night the most stately street in the world: on one side the Louvre and the gardens, on the other side rows of palaces that had once housed the great nobles of the monarchy. Lights—Moran reveled in lights. He never grew tired of wandering up and down Broadway, when his peculiar talents could find no outlet.

Moran was a professional blackmailer.

Paris! Over there were the lights of the Place de la Concorde, half-hidden by the trees. The flitting lights of the taxicabs reminded him of the lightning-bugs in June at home. Beyond the Place rose the indescribable beauty of the Eiffel Tower, illuminated.

Moran possessed the fiddle-string, uncontrolled. The night thrilled him to ecstasy. Music often brought tears to his eyes. The sight of a maimed war-veteran stuffed his throat. Yet he had a heart of stone and a brain of ice. In the pursuit of his business he was as merciless as a cobra. At the present moment he had a packet of letters he wished to sell.

The quarry was here in Paris. She had run away from New York. The fool—as if running away mattered! Donny Moran could always follow. Oh, she would come to heel. She was only a canary, fluttering about desperately in search of an open window. As a matter of fact, the job would be far easier here in Paris, where she would be more or less friendless.

She wouldn't have much money: a letter of credit from Friend Husband, perhaps to the sum of five thousand. But she would be sure to bring her pearls, and those were worth sixty thousand, easily. And it would be ten times safer to dispose of them here

in Paris, where Donny Moran was unknown to the police. Besides, it would be on the level. When he began to hock the pearls, they would be lawfully his. The softest game in the world!

Women were fools, he mused. When they gave, they gave everything, and with reckless abandon let their reputations ride the wind. They seemed possessed to declare themselves. It wasn't enough to cheat; the fools must embalm the fact in scented envelopes. They spent hours with men who weren't their hubbies, and then went home and wrote all about it and secretly hid them to the nearest letter-box. Cunning as badgers, up to the impulse to write, never missing a trick; and then they spilt the beans by writing Dearest what Dearest already knew.

ONE thing, however, Moran had learned by experience: He no longer wasted time hunting for the letters Dearest wrote. The woman usually hid these with infernal cunning. With the man it was different. He was generally careless, even if he happened to be in love, which was more or less open to skepticism. He never tied up her letters with pink ribbons. He threw some of them in his collar-drawer, some into the drawer of his desk, and carried one or two choice bits in his pocket, to pore over in moments of leisure. Even a philanderer gets a thrill out of that kind of letter.

Men! Moran lit a cigarette. He knew all about men and a great deal about women. Men liked to brag. As often as not, they meant no harm. They felt superior to the rank and file, and had to express the fact aloud, among cronies. Women were different; you couldn't dig the truth out of them, not if you used all the hot pincers of the Inquisition. But they *would* write letters. When women wrote love-letters, they meant it; men only thought they did.

If the woman was without children, often she would fight. But when she had a kid of six or seven,—as Mrs. Wardlaw had,—then you had her. Of course she'd run hither and thither; but in the end— Yes sir, the softest game of all. Only once in a hundred times did the victim turn aggressive and put you on the hop. And the easiest game to stop, too, if the fools but knew it. All they had to do was to go straight to the police. For blackmail was the supreme game of bluff. Brave men and brave women; somehow courage and common-sense deserted them, when confronted by the thought of scandal. But once the hook was in them, they were done; and then, no mercy—an attribute which Moran did not possess, never having had it explained to him.

He had been watching Wendall and the woman for some time. Daily, Moran went the rounds of the fashionable tea-rooms. You watched this pair, or that. If there was any sign of sentimentality, you made it your business to look up the pair. If he learned that the man wasn't the hubby, two things might be deduced therefrom: that the hubby didn't care a hoot, or that the woman was running wild because the hubby no longer thought to play the lover. There are some women who will be loved, and it's a wise hubby who never forgets that.

Moran had all the threads in his hands. He knew that Wardlaw loved his wife and took it for granted that his wife knew it. She had everything, hadn't she? Home, beauty, social standing, a child, a husband who took her to the opera once in a while and spent the week-ends with her at the summer home—she had all these things, hadn't she? But Wardlaw wouldn't run away with her—play hooky—make believe they were just married—fool things like that such as women, romantically inclined, constantly sigh for.

Moran was inclined to believe that there had been nothing wrong—just reckless foolery. Yet any one of those letters, taken into court, would damn her socially. Her husband would go to his grave believing the worst.

Wendall was dead now. Heart-failure, or something like that, the newspapers said. Moran often wondered if the shock had caused the man's death. Mrs. Wardlaw had evidently informed him that she was in threat of blackmail.

The bachelor apartment hadn't been hard to get into. Of course—Moran had to admit—he had not been sure of any letters; he had simply to play the regular hunch. Two days after he had had his first interview with Mrs. Wardlaw, he had learned that Wendall had died suddenly. Moran considered this a lucky take-off, for Wendall had been a football star and had liked a fight for its own sake.

Wardlaw was a quiet man, but it was rumored that when he was roused he was something of a terror. All very good. Wendall dead, Wardlaw of uncertain temper, a child— That string of pearls seemed very near.

Moran suddenly chuckled. Across the street a young man and a young woman were strolling along, arm in arm. Well, this was France, where it was perfectly natural to hug your best girl in public. In the land of the free they were generally arrested.

He was positive that he could get forty thousand for the pearls. Ten thousand for a whirl at Monte Carlo, and thirty thousand salted down. Oh, he would not be loose about it. There would be no come-back for the lady, once she surrendered the pearls. She would sign a little document in which it would be stated that she had exchanged the pearls for value received. The police would not be able to touch him. A perfectly lawful transaction. Indeed, come to think of it, his price was exceedingly modest, considering that the pearls were worth a husband, a son and several millions.

"Fountain pens and ink make lots of people think," he said aloud, and turned back into the room.

Moran was about thirty-four, handsome, sleek, always modestly and fashionably dressed. Contrary to the usual notion, one could find by study no criminal marks upon his face. His teeth were white and sound, and an engaging smile disclosed them. His education was superficial, but he was amazingly adept in concealing this fact. He was always clever enough to dodge any intellectual deeps. If a subject was beyond him, he readily admitted the fact. He passed as a sportsman, and sportsmen were notable for their lack of deeper culture. This made his slips forgivable. It is human nature lightly to pass over the intellectual deficiencies of a sportsman—probably because certain dukes were in the same category. Oh, he was adroit enough, was Moran.

In the Tenderloin they called him Adonis; hence the nickname—Donny.

Moran did not ape the English; he knew that he could not do the trick well enough to pass. So he acknowledged, wherever he went, that he was an American watching the sports, ready to try a bout with the bookies whenever the opportunity offered.

Unlike most scoundrels of his breed, he was not gyved by any serious folly. He never plunged. Some day he would have enough to live on in retirement. If he succeeded in getting the pearls, he might live comfortably for several years without risks. The marvel of blackmailing was that nearly always some one was ready to pay. The bravest shook at the knees at the thought of printed publicity. Moran bought his morning newspapers reverently.

He opened his kit-bag and took out the letters, sat in a chair and began reading. Fire! Love! "He doesn't understand me. He takes me as if I belonged to him! I cannot make him see things from my point of view. You understand me, dearest. . . ." Moran chuckled. It was funny. Husbands never understood their wives, and wives never understood their husbands. Fire and love: but search as he might, Moran could not find in these letters what, in his vernacular, "listened bad." Just a fool of a woman who should have been a novelist. But nevertheless there was destruction if these letters reached the husband; and reach him they would, happen the wife refused "to come across."

MORAN arose early next morning. One thing he could not do—find satisfaction in a breakfast consisting of rolls, marmalade and cocoa. He needed bacon and eggs, and buttered toast and coffee. In pursuit of coffee he had failed utterly—that is to say, the American style of coffee. Bitter and black he found it, and no amount of hot milk would mellow the brew. Still, even this was preferable to cocoa. He had found a place on the Rue St. Honoré where the bacon and eggs were good and the coffee less bitter than at the hotel.

As he dressed, he looked out. September sunshine on a morning in Paris, viewed from a lofty window, was a subject worthy the brush of Corot. A purple-gray mist lay upon the city; the sun had not yet had time to dissipate it. The Eiffel Tower and the church spires appeared to be floating; there seemed to be no basic substance. Moran thought that if he could speak the lingo, Paris would be the place to live in. Across the way, in the Tuileries gardens, small boys were bunting a rubber ball about. Moran laughed as he saw one of the boys bunt the ball with his head. It was never too early to play.

Half an hour later he nodded briskly to the head porter, who rose from his little desk in the lobby and bowed. In the street Moran purchased a *boutonnière*, used a window as a mirror, and, satisfied that the flower gave the proper touch, strode toward his rendezvous with Monsieur Cochon et Cie. He had a few French phrases acquired by arguments with taxicab drivers and by reviewing billboards and menus. He had an alert and absorbing mind.



Bobby—to lose him! She swept the little boy to her breast fiercely.

It would be ten o'clock before *she* would have her breakfast, over at the Crillon. Her morning's beauty sleep must not be disturbed. Women were seldom amenable to reason while wearing their chin-straps and wrinkle plasters. The nurse and the little boy, however, would be over in the gardens or in the Champs Elysées.

The Crillon, where all the famous darlings of the screen put up when they came to Paris! My, how they splashed about, particularly in the Paris editions of American newspapers! Ho-hum. Moran sighed. Pickings weren't very good out at Los Angeles. Many of the darlings didn't care a hoot what they wrote, if they were minded to write. Moran laughed and twirled his cane.

Thought to shake him, did she? As if he hadn't kept tabs on

her continuously after that first interview, when she had told him to wait! Oh, she wouldn't make any scene; she was too clever for that; but he knew that there would not be any color on her cheeks or lips when she entered the lounging-room of the Crillon.

Mrs. Wardlaw was spreading butter and honey upon a crescent roll when one of the porter's boys knocked on the door, and being bidden to enter, presented a silver tray upon which lay a visiting card. One glance at the card seemed to drive all the blood in her body back into her heart, to become congealed there.

Yet in a steady voice she said: "Where is Monsieur?"

"He waits in the lounging-room, madame," said the boy, his young glance skimming about the room and absorbing the fact that Madame was well-born.

Of what followed, Moran had no distinct recollection. Irresistibly he was being forced toward the entrance.

"Say that I shall be down presently."

"Yes, madame." With an absurd genuflection the boy whirled about and departed, closing the door softly. Madame would tip him on the day she left.

Mrs. Wardlaw picked up the card and instantly dropped it, as if it had a viper's fang, which indeed it had. He was here! He had followed her to Paris. She suddenly realized that she had been expecting this blow ever since her arrival.

"Bobby, Bobby!" she whispered, gazing at the photograph of a little boy. "God help your mother, Bobby, for only a miracle can! Oh!" She clenched her fists. "If I were but a man! If I had a brother! The vile jackal!"

Words were useless; she was simply wasting time. The quicker she got dressed and downstairs, the better; if she kept the jackal waiting too long, what little mercy there might be in him would be dried up. Fifty thousand! Why, she was utterly lost! And she had only fallen in love with love! And yet she knew that any one of those letters—any one of the twelve—would ruin her if ever one got into court. This jackal would send them to her husband—John, dear thoughtless John, whom she had always loved at the bottom of her heart, to whom her love had returned as in a circle!

But what could she do? She had no money, not enough to pay fifty thousand in blackmail. The pearls—John would be sure to ask her to wear them. She struck her forehead with the back of her hand. Guilty of nothing but folly, guilty of nothing more serious than inquisitiveness, adventuring simply to renew the glamour of romance. Wendall had been a kindly, honorable man, much in love with her. . . . Hurriedly she began to dress.

When she eventually entered the lounging-room, she was beautiful and dignified. Moran rose and bowed. She had not rouged her lips, and they were pale. Well he knew the signs of fear.

"I think that corner will do. It is early. Perhaps they will think I'm some dressmaker." Moran showed his teeth, Cheshire style. Here was the canary.

Mrs. Wardlaw followed, sitting opposite, a marble-topped table between them.

"It was useless to run away," he began.

Mrs. Wardlaw wanted to scream; she pressed her hands together tightly instead, her eyes holding the jackal's. "I cannot raise fifty thousand dollars. Can't you be made to see that? I cannot go to Mr. Wardlaw. I have no property of my own."

"You could lose your pearls, you know. You can leave them somewhere, return and find them gone. Many a woman has played that trick. Simple. Three thousand miles away from

New York, who would know the truth? I have twelve letters to sell. Why, when you come to think of it, you ought to thank me. Supposing they had been found among Wendall's effects? Well, I am ready to sell them. How they are bought is no concern of mine. Buy them, or I shall send them to your husband."

"And ruin me uselessly." Her voice broke. "I have a little son—"

"I am figuring on that fact. The rules of the game—"

"And such a horrible game!" she interrupted.

"When I sell any indiscreet letters, I sell them all; I hold none back. When they are bought, the incident is closed, as they say." He spoke amiably, but his eyes were stonily hard.



She shuddered and drew back a little, as if her foot had touched something obscene.

Here they were interrupted by the approach of a handsome middle-aged woman. Moran rose to his feet.

"Oh, Mrs. Wardlaw, please excuse me; but can you make the tea at five-thirty?"

"Yes. —Mr. Moran," said Mrs. Wardlaw. "He sells and buys jewels."

A flicker of admiration came into Moran's eyes. She was game. And clever, too. For if she had not introduced him, the other woman would certainly have wondered why.

"At five-thirty, then. I understand that there is a wonderful sable coat for sale today. Those poor Russians!" The woman smiled at both Mrs. Wardlaw and Moran and turned away.

"Had you a mother?" asked Mrs. Wardlaw.

"Certainly. I was not hatched in an incubator. Wait a minute. I'll give you a bit of advice out of office-hours. Make a clean breast of it to your husband. Tell him it was just folly, that he hadn't given you the attention you needed, that he no longer understood you."

The mockery caused her to bend her head for a moment; then she raised it, and the eyes of the doe gazed steadily into those of the jackal.

"If I had no son, I should defy you. I should be justified if I shot you."

"Perfectly true."

"I am a good woman; I have only been foolish." The agony in her soul showed for a minute.

Moran saw this transitory agony, and he knew thereby that the game was near its end. "When you dance," he said, "you have to pay the fiddler."

"You are the vilest thing on earth."

"One of the vilest," he corrected. "And you'd better be careful of your voice; it's getting high. I have the hide of a rhino. Compliments do not penetrate. The question is, what are you going to do? I am growing restive."

She dropped her hands into her lap and stared at them for a moment. "Will you give me two days to search for imitation pearls to match my string?"

Ah, that was better. Moran did not want to send the letters to the husband; he wanted the money. He had her. It took patience, of course. They wailed and wept and ran about in circles, but in the end they paid. Oh, once in a while there was a slip-up, and hubby got the letters. It was business, you know; you had to establish a precedent and then stick to it. Yes, he had her. She knew that he would do exactly as he promised.

"Two days, then. I'll be a good sport and give you forty-eight hours. But no tricks. The next time I call—the pearls! If those pearls aren't in my hands within forty-eight hours, off go the letters to Friend Husband. Two days, and then the jig is up."

Moran got up and bowed gravely. There was no pity for the woman; there was no pity for the (Continued on page 123)

"You know in your heart that I have done nothing wrong."

"I am absolutely sure of it."

"Then you will give me the letters?"—eagerly.

He laughed. "For fifty thousand in cash, or one string of fine pearls. Let us admit that I batten on fools, that I am a crook. But this I tell you: I never break my word. You will buy these letters, or I'll ship them to your husband and look about for another job."



The MORAL REVOLT

By JUDGE BEN B. LINDSEY

Judge of the Juvenile and Family Court of Denver, Colorado

A WOMAN whom I shall call Mrs. John Smith sat and looked at me across the long table in my private chambers. She was plainly ill at ease; and she nervously rolled and unrolled the gloves she had drawn from her hands.

They were fine hands, with long, taper fingers, and an expressive way of moving. They went with the sensitive and beautiful face, the blue eyes, the soft brown hair, the sweetly shaped though nervous mouth. She was of a type that would seek a court only in the last extremity. I saw her look about and eye the shut door as if she feared it did not insure the privacy she wanted.

"I have come here, Judge Lindsey," she began, "because I have heard that secrets are safe with you, and that you help people. I have reached a crisis in my life, and help is what I need."

"You shall have all the help I can give," I answered; "and your secret, whatever it is, will be safe."

"You seem more like a doctor than the traditional judge," she said, smiling.

"That is a great compliment," I answered. "I do try to deal with sick hearts, more or less as a physician deals with sick bodies. I think that is better than punishing people for their sins—though there are times when I do have to punish. What is the trouble?"

Again she looked about her uneasily. "Will there be any record of this?"

"Not a scrap of a record," I said emphatically, "except maybe your name, address and telephone-number on this pad."

"So I have heard," she replied. "Otherwise I could not have come here. You see, one thing that made me nervous about coming was that once, before I lived in Denver, I used to know a social worker who told me about her work and her methods. I could never have come to her. She kept what she called case-sheets; and she used to put down every detail about the cases she dealt with. She would put down things of the most confidential sort. It makes me shudder to think of it. I don't see how she ever contrived to get a truthful word out of anybody."

"She probably got a lot of words and very little truth," I said. "I know her type; but I am glad to be able to add that not all social workers are like that. I suppose she called the stuff she recorded 'scientific data,' didn't she?"

Mrs. Smith laughed and nodded.

"There is a certain type of social worker," I went on, "that is long on scientific data. These unfortunate zealots busy themselves to such an extent with surveys and graphs and mathematical computations, that they clean forget that they have to do with people. The shelves of our libraries groan with tons of the dusty junk they write. Most of it is fit only for Ph.D. theses, with footnotes and book references at the bottom of each page."

"She was always talking," put in Mrs. Smith, "about being scientific, and having the modern technique."

"And if she's the type you describe," I added, "I'll warrant she has told that I'm not scientific."

Mrs. Smith's eyes widened. "How did you know?"

"Oh," I said, "that's easy. I get reports every

now and then of what the most scientific of our social workers think about my failure to keep 'scientific data.' They are very amusing. Still, I wouldn't have you think we keep no records. We do. We have case-sheets. They have their place in a certain class of cases. We even make surveys. But we also know when not to make them. And, too, you must remember that not all social workers are as absorbed in scientific data as the one you tell of. Every profession has its quota of incompetents, and social work is no exception. However, you may be sure that you are quite safe from the case-sheet here."

"But," she said hesitatingly, "if I should be seen coming here, wont some one suspect that I'm in difficulties?"

"People come here for all sorts of reasons," I replied. "They come in behalf of friends who are in trouble; they come looking for jobs; they come looking for babies to adopt; now and then an opposition spy hovers round in the hope of digging up something that can be used against me in the next political campaign. Reporters come seeking news; magazine-writers come seeking material; story-writers come seeking plots and local color; out-of-town lawyers and judges come to find out if I violate the legal conventions as much as I'm said to, and they want to know if I really do send kids to reform schools and reformatories with nothing to keep them from running away but their word to me and the railroad ticket to where they're going. You see, if it were to be suspected that all these people come here because they are in trouble, the suspects would be kept pretty busy. The fact is, the suspects have given it up as a bad job."

"I even manage to take care of the proprieties in a reasonably efficient though probably 'unscientific' manner. Mrs. Lindsey's desk, you will note, is just beyond that door; and the two doors of this room are never locked. Everybody in the court is under instructions to walk in at any time without knocking. So you see, women who want to talk with me confidentially are much better protected against calumny than they would be in the office of the average physician. And now what is it all about, Mrs. Smith?"

"I am separated from my husband," she began. "We have lived apart for a year, and he is not contributing to the support of our five-year-old son. I live with my mother, and I have some money, so I require no help from him; but he *should* support his son. He makes a good income, and is well able to. I wish you would take the matter up with him."

"I'll be glad to," I said, looking at her attentively. "But tell me, Mrs. Smith, what is your *real* reason for coming to see me?"

Again she rolled and unrolled her gloves. She looked down at them in silence, her long lashes sweeping her cheeks. At last she spoke, very low: "I—wish I might be with my husband. You see—I love him. I wish you could find out what is the trouble, and bring us together."

"And you don't know what is the trouble?"

She shook her head. "I never could understand it, never knew why he acted as he did. But he seems to take it for granted that I understand; also he wont believe me when I say I don't. He



GEORGE F. PIERROT

Editor *The American Boy* says of "The Revolt of Modern Youth," the book by Judge Lindsey which was the forerunner of these articles: "I wish every parent and teacher could be required to read it."

A new code of morals—that, in brief, is the thesis of these extraordinary articles. The intimate life-stories confided by men and women of all sorts to Judge Lindsey form the basis of his argument—stories which he has here set down with judicial conviction and candor.



Judge Lindsey in consultation with one of the assistants of Dr. Franklin G. Ebaugh (Director of the Psychopathic Department of the Colorado State Hospital), concerning a domestic relations case. Such a consultation foreshadows the time when courts shall become hospitals—moral hospitals.

has a great deal of pride—so have I. And I find it hard to ask questions. He never would say much, never would speak plainly. But once—he said I was cold toward him.”

“Were you?”

“I think not.”

“Sex misunderstandings,” I observed, “are the cause of most divorces and separations—whatever may be the reasons given in public. Usually they result from ignorance, and the failure of the man and woman to understand themselves or each other.”

“I suppose this is something of the sort,” she replied. “Perhaps you can get to the bottom of it. Things have gotten to a point where I feel I must do something if I’m ever to have him back.” She paused, a catch in her breath. “One night a month ago I saw him at a dance-resort with a girl. I have heard that he is attentive to her. I think he is living with her. I don’t know her, but she is pretty—though not,” she added with a pathetic smile, “as pretty as I am, if you won’t misunderstand my saying so.”

“This is a good time and place to be frank,” I answered. “Beauty, however, is not the only factor in these situations.”

She nodded. “I am not jealous of her. I would not be greatly disturbed over his relations with her if I knew he loved me, and if I saw any chance of getting him back. If to hold him meant ignoring affairs of that kind, I could ignore them and not be so very unhappy about it. I think such affairs are likely to be casual, and that this would mean nothing that could really harm me or deprive me of him—if he loved me.”

“You are rather unusually moderate in your views on that subject,” I said. “What does that mean? Is it simply that you have worked out a philosophy, or that you are charitable toward him because—excuse me if I speak plainly—you have a similar inclination that might balance his, an inclination, say, that he knows about, or thinks he knows about?”

“Not exactly that,” she replied. “There is, or was, another man; but not in the sense that John thinks there is. I used him to make John jealous after we were married, because the more jealous he is, the more I love him.”

“Oh,” I said. “The more jealous he is, the more you love him; and the other man is just a fiction. Is that it?”

She shook her head. “I mean that he isn’t real now, though



Photo by Ralph Baird

Judge Lindsey addressing the young probationers who report to him semi-monthly, and congratulating them on their fine records.

he once was. Judge, I've never told this to a soul; but I'll tell you. His name was Richard. I—I lived with him for a time before I was married to John. And he was wonderful; it was an experience of great happiness. I wish—"

She broke off with a sigh, then after a short silence resumed. "John does not know this. But he does believe—owing to things I have said to tantalize him—that I was once in love with another man—he doesn't know who."

"But why—" I began.

"My reason? Simply to make him jealous. You see, women are not as free as men—at least not yet. I don't think the double standard is just, but I more or less accept it. And so I am willing he should have this girl I saw him with if she makes him happy; but I make no claim to a similar liberty; and I won't be jealous so long as he loves me. If he doesn't, then I just can't help being jealous."

"But he would not stand for similar conduct on my part; and the mere notion that I once loved another man before we were married is enough to upset him. If he knew the real facts it would be still worse. And of course the notion that I may still care for the other man makes him madly jealous. He can't get that idea out of his head. I suppose that is partly my fault, in having started something I couldn't stop."

"And yet, when I found out how suspicious he was, I couldn't resist the temptation to make him jealous—particularly since I could do it without having a lover. He calls Richard, whose name he does not know, my 'phantom lover.' He's jealous of a phantom. Do you see? I may have carried it too far. But making him jealous was really a way of loving him."

"And your husband's side of it?"

She looked up eagerly. "Oh, how I wish I knew it! That is why I have come to you. Perhaps you can get both sides."

"When can I see him?"

"I'll send him to you."

After a few minutes more of talk she left.

The conversation with Mrs. Smith, which I have reported as briefly as possible here, occupied a matter of two hours.

Two days later I was sitting face to face with her husband Mr. Smith.

"I have been anxious to come to you before now, Judge Lindsey," he said as he took the very chair in which his wife had sat during her talk with me. "But my wife stole a march on me. I am glad she did—though since she doesn't care for me I am rather at a loss to know why she did it. I suppose she has the welfare of our boy in mind."

"The reason she came to me is that she loves you," I said. "She mentioned your failure to provide money for the support of your child, but that was merely an entering wedge. I had a long talk with her. Do you love her?"

"Yes," he said, simply. "But actions speak louder than words; and you can discount whatever she may have told you about loving me. She loves some one else much better."

"What makes you think that?"

"Well, she has simply shut me out. I can't begin to tell you how miserable it has made me, and how I have tried to hold her. To me she is the most exquisitely beautiful woman in the world. She is perfection, and as for her personality you have had a chance to judge that for yourself; but she is not for me, apparently. She has a lover."

"I have known a good many women," I remarked, "who had lovers, and who yet loved their husbands. Don't let your training and traditions keep you from thinking straight or accepting facts. Do you know the man?"

"That's the funny part of it. She talks about him; he is in her mind constantly; and the horrible part of it is—" Here he drew a long breath, and looked me in the face. "Judge, I thank God I'm not talking to a judge. This is the first time I have fully realized what your methods



JOSHUA LIEBERMAN

Secretary of Pioneer Youth of America, says: "I think Judge Lindsey's work is the bravest and most remarkable work done with children in the country."

mean to people. I'll talk frankly to you now. I'm a very emotional man, and I love my wife deeply. It is because of her coldness that we have had to separate and go our ways. It is partly her coldness, and partly because of an intolerable thing that happens. She has made the situation impossible."

"What about the girl?" I asked of him then.

"Oh, she told you of that, did she! Well, *that's* the reason for the girl. She is right if she thinks I'm living with Minnie; and she has herself to thank, because I'd a thousand times rather have her than any other woman in the world. I'm not apologizing. She needn't object, so long as she herself is crazy about that fellow she knew before we were married, whoever he was. Did she tell you about him?"

"She told me a great many things," I answered. "Tell me your side of this. Who is this chap? Is he here in Denver?"

"Hell, no—he's never been in Denver," he replied. "But he's in her mind and heart, damn him, where I have no chance to get my hands on him."

"Isn't your evidence," I suggested, "rather intangible? May he not have his sole existence in your mind and heart rather than in hers?"

He shook his head. "Even when I kiss her," he growled, "she imagines that she's kissing that phantom lover of hers. You can guess how I feel when I'm conscious of such a thing as that. She prefers him to me," he concluded, "and she makes no bones about it. If she should put it in words, she could not more plainly tell me that to her I'm a very secondary person. And Judge—" He stopped, laying a shaking hand on my knee, and his face looked gray and tired. "My humiliation doesn't end there. That damn' ghost seems actually to be living in our home—I can almost see him. Judge, I may be a fool, but—well—I'm superfluous in her life."

And he explained a number of things in words of one syllable. "How," he finished, "am I to put up with this thing? I can't do it."

"You would, of course, be glad to find out that your inferences concerning her attachment for this other man were entirely wrong," I said to him.

"Of course."

"And you would be willing to go back to her if I could prove that you were wrong?"

"Yes, but—"

"Leave it to me," I said. "I'll communicate with you later."

Whereupon he took his departure, looking hopeful in spite of himself.

All of which represents one hour with Mr. Smith—presented here, of course, barely in outline.

Soon after he had left, Mrs. Smith hurriedly arrived at the court, without an appointment, and asked if she could see me at once.

"I knew John was coming," she exclaimed eagerly, "and I just couldn't wait, Judge!"



Judge Lindsey and Miss Ruth Vincent, Director of Girls' Work, Juvenile and Family Court.

"Mrs. Smith," I said, "you are sure, are you, that this phantom lover of yours is merely a device, to excite jealousy in your husband?"

She nodded. "Most assuredly."

"Have you ever permitted the image of this phantom to come into your mind at times when your husband kisses you, for instance?"

She flushed.

"Once, Judge," she replied, "it seemed as though I did. It

was merely that there came into my mind a memory of that affair before my marriage and of what a contrast there was between that and what I now had. And you see, in a moment of exasperation, I said something that indicated what I was thinking—nothing very specific; but it was quite specific enough. John became furious."

"But how," I demanded of her, "did you come to tell him such a thing?"

"I thought it would arouse him. He never makes love to me as I wish him to. Do you understand?"

SHE bit her lip in an effort at self-control. "Judge, my husband is this kind of a man: He is always self-contained—unadaptable about everything he does. If he goes for a walk—just a pleasure walk, you know—his impulse is not to stroll and steep himself in beauty and enjoyment as he goes, but rather to hurry as if he were bent on getting somewhere. You'd think he was going to catch a train and was late for it. In going toward his destination he would want to cover in a few minutes a distance for which I, with my temperament, would find a half-hour none too much; and, of course, if I happened to be with him, he would forget all about me, in his impatience and nervousness, and would leave me far behind.

"And he has another trait. If we go out together, he has a way of walking on ahead of me, just as if it didn't matter whether I came along or not. And so I don't care about taking walks, with only myself, and my own thoughts for company. And yet, if one should complete such a walk the best way one could, with the aid of a crutch, say—and perhaps not thinking very hard of the person with whom one was supposed to be walking—why, that would become a cause for offense. It would imply, to a person who did not understand, and who was always in a hurry, that one would rather be walking with some one else. But who would be to blame for such a condition of things?"

"Nobody in particular," I answered. "Chiefly an educational system that doesn't teach people how to adjust temperaments. For temperaments differ; and people should be intelligent enough to compromise and keep step. I think a little of the right kind of instruction—from a psychiatrist, for instance—might inform you and your husband of a lot of things which it is the crime of society and convention that you didn't know when you were married. The whole trouble here has been ignorance, not incompatibility. If he doesn't want you to walk by yourself, let him lend you his arm; and if he doesn't want phantoms around, let him be something less of a phantom himself. I am perfectly sure that he doesn't even dream of the things you have been telling me.

"But there is another side to it, Mrs. Smith. You have been as blind as he. How simple it would have been had you told him what was the matter!"

"I have thought of that since," she answered with a rush of tears. "It was pride that kept me silent. I suppose it has kept both of us silent."

"Now," I continued, "I am going to put you and your husband in the hands of a psychiatrist who will tell you some things about yourselves that you don't know. Such instruction will enable you to conduct yourselves intelligently in future. I shall have one more talk with Mr. Smith, and then one with the two of you together; and I think that will settle it.

"Oh, one other thing," I added after a moment's thought. "Don't try to dictate to him about that girl. Let him alone, and I'm sure he will drop her. But if you insist on his dropping her, I can't answer for the result."

"He can do as he pleases, so he comes back to me," she said. "But even if I felt differently about it, I would see the soundness of your advice."

I GOT in touch with Mr. Smith the next day, and I gave him a clear account in plain English of what I have had to put down here in English less plain.

"She hasn't a phantom lover," I concluded my explanation to him. "She loves you, and she brought in the phantom not because she cared about anyone else in her mind, but simply to make you jealous and stir you up. Also, what you don't know about making love to your wife would apparently fill a book. I

don't wonder you've had trouble. It's a wonder to me she ever stood by you as long as she has. Now all you've got to do is go back to her and use some common sense. Above all, quit carrying the details of your work home with you at the end of the day. You may be a pretty fair business man under those conditions, but as a husband you become a candidate for the divorce court. In the meantime, you can take my word for it that your wife loves you and wants you back."

Then I told him what she had said of his habit of walking on ahead when they were out together.

"God!" he exclaimed. "Is that it? Do you think so? Just that she wanted me with her?"

"Yes," I said. "It's as simple as that. And you didn't see it. Lots of men are just as blind—and lots of women too, where the shoe is on the other foot."

"I'm going to her right now," he cried.

"Hold hard," I said. "You'll do nothing of the kind. First you'll have a talk with the medicine man, and learn how to exorcise this demon lover, or whatever he is."

"All right," he laughed. "Make an appointment for me right away."

"What about that girl?" I asked.

"That's over with," he said with an emphasis which made me know that he was speaking the truth.

I turned to the telephone, found my psychiatrist at leisure, and presently sent Mr. Smith on his way. Of course I had previously prepared the way by a conference with the physician. He knew all about it.

Later I sent for Mrs. Smith, told her as much of my talk with her husband as I thought best, and sent her to the psychiatrist that same afternoon.

Apparently the Smith case is settled. I shall be much surprised if they ever have another serious misunderstanding. Their marriage is now grounded as every marriage should be grounded. They have enough money for their needs; they are intellectually and temperamentally congenial; they have good health, and they have an intelligent sex life based on a thorough mutual understanding of what they are about, and on the mutual confidence which such an understanding begets.

On this matter they have no reservations, silences, or secret thoughts any longer. The light has been let in, and they have mental and spiritual health where there was formerly doubt, fear, suspicion and tension of the nerves. Where the whole stream of their life was formerly tainted by these things, so that all their relations were distorted and strained, it now flows clean, clear and quiet, with only such disturbances of its calm as are to be expected in all human relationships. Marriage has become, for them, the success it is

capable of being in all cases where the conditions are such that it has a reasonable chance. *Given a chance, marriage is a sound institution.* This case is only one of the many proofs I have of its possibilities.

Yesterday while I was on my way to luncheon the Smiths passed me in their car, with their boy between them. They waved a delighted salutation.

"Those people seem to be good friends of yours," said a visiting lawyer who was with me.

"Pretty good," I answered. "They have watched the workings of my court rather closely and are quite enthusiastic about it."

MY reason for telling the story of the Smiths, and others like it, is that such happenings—and they are happening all the time—illustrate better than any amount of expository argument how ignorance, second-hand, traditional thinking, and our sedulous censorship on books that give any genuine information on sex, can turn the splendid possibilities of the most promising marriage into a miserable failure, unless experience and knowledge from some source can intervene.

It seems incredible, when one considers this story of the Smiths, that two intelligent and cultured persons, both of them adepts in the uses of the mind and the handling of ideas, could have been so completely confused by facts which ought to be commonplace to any mature person.

From start to finish the whole difficulty was needless. Three things caused it: First, ignorance; second, traditional and irra-



PROFESSOR HENRY
H. GODDARD

Department of Psychology,
Ohio State University, says
of "The Revolt of Modern
Youth," the book by Judge
Lindsey of which these
articles are virtually a
continuation: "It is a
splendid piece of work and ought
to be read by every father
and mother and teacher in
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An airplane view of Denver's new civic center. Judge Lindsey's Juvenile and Family Court is to have quarters on the top floor of this great building.

tional jealousy, based on the property notion as applied to women; and third, pride, which prevented frank speech on either side. These three things are at the root of most marital unhappiness; and they can often be removed with the aid of a third person qualified by training and experience and an educated sympathy, to diagnose such difficulties. Of course, where the marriage is between incompatibles, that is different. For such marriages there is usually no solution but separation, divorce or intelligent compromise in the interest of the children, if there are children.

There is one other factor in unsuccessful marriages, however, which is not so easily disposed of: I mean *poverty—plus too many children*. Poverty alone does not necessarily make trouble in marriage; for a husband and wife free from incumbrances can, if need be, both work, and so be self-supporting. This is an excellent solution, particularly in the case of young couples who need and want each other, and who are not financially able to afford marriage on the usual basis.

But when children come in such marriages, the poverty which, prior to their coming, was merely an inconvenience which youth puts up with light-heartedly, often becomes a tragedy.

Nearly all the annulment cases, in behalf of minors, that come before me involve, first, poverty and economic incompetence on the part of the husband—often by reason of his youth; secondly, the coming of a child *within a year after marriage*, or even within a few months, where there have been prenuptial relations.

The type of mind that thinks that the way to save the world is to keep it ignorant, is the type that is also willing to put deadly poisons into alcohol in order to prevent people from drinking it. The fact is that the poisoning of the alcohol does not prevent people from taking a chance on it, and that it kills quite a number of those who do so. If certain of the moral savages running around loose in this country think the death of these people a fair penalty for their transgression of the law and for their failure to do as the moralists tell them, I simply don't

agree. I would feel that there was some equity in the situation, however, if some of that alcohol could be fed to the persons who are willing to feed it to other people who may or may not know that it is deadly.

And in marriage the same thing is true in a different way; for in marriages where the parents are financially incompetent to support children, the birth of children is worse than an inconvenience; it is likely to wreck the marriage.

I don't mean that such a couple will necessarily seek divorce, but I do mean that however well they may stick together for the sake of the children, they will not be happy. The fear and anxiety and worry caused by the bite of poverty and by debt, make happiness or kindly human relationships nearly impossible. And, of course, such homes are not fit places for children to live in.

On the other hand, put off the birth of children till the parents are on their feet financially, and then a few babies will help rather than hinder, and unite rather than estrange their parents.

Young couples who marry usually do so primarily because they love each other and want to be together without opposition and persecution from society, such as they would incur if they followed their natural inclinations outside of marriage. If they are really intelligent in these matters, and if they are informed, and if they know what they are about, they marry with the thought that this marriage relationship will in due time strengthen into an intimate comradeship, at once physical and spiritual—a comradeship which is not attainable without the tremendous emotional momentum of sex behind it—a comradeship which is capable at its best of making a man and a woman genuinely one. Later, sex slowly begins to fade out of the picture; it becomes less important, less central, after middle life; but by then it has done its work.

Having thus grounded their marriage on what is most true and permanent in their natures, and having likewise gotten themselves into a reasonably secure economic position, they may have children with some assurance that they are not thereby sounding the knell of their own happiness. (Continued on page 114)

The Inquiring Reporter

By
George Weston



Illustrated by
Leslie Benson

MELL hated to wake up that morning. Asleep, he had been dreaming—dreaming that he was in a bedroom so large that he couldn't see the walls, a bedroom softly lighted by rose windows and crystal chandeliers. The bed itself was of mahogany, its panels adorned with paintings; and the rest of the furniture, as far as the eye could reach, was on a scale so sumptuous that if you had seen it on the screen you would have sat back breathlessly expectant that the great Du Barry would presently arise from that wonderful couch and let the common people see why Louis loved her so.

But it wasn't Madame Du Barry who lay with her head on

"If you want a story for your paper, watch that store."

WHEN George Weston isn't flitting along the shores of the Mediterranean, he's usually to be found on his Connecticut farm skillfully weaving the experiences and impressions of his life into romances like this engaging story of an exceedingly naïve young man and a cabaret dancing-girl.

the pillows; it was Mell Dawley; and looking down at himself, he perceived without amazement that his pajamas were of silk; and looking up, he saw without surprise that a footman in livery was standing there with a fine gold tray in his hand.

"Your breakfast, sire," said the footman, bending low.

("Ah-ha!" thought Mell in his dream. "I'm a king, then!")

It was a delectable breakfast: strawberries and cream, and coffee, and bacon and eggs curiously shaped like bunches of bananas, and pie and ice-cream, and a lamb-chop bone for the dog. The dog was old Ranger, a white-haired nondescript which Mell had owned in his youth; and after Ranger had sat up and caught his bone, and carried it to the mat, the footman brought a silver bowl and washed Mell's face and hands, and lighted a cigarette for him. Whereupon an ash-receiver walked forward—an ash-receiver with four short legs (like a dachshund) and a very long neck (like an ostrich), and its head hollowed out for business.

"The mirror, sire," said the footman, wheeling it forward on its golden casters.

Mell sat up and looked at himself in the mirror—heart-breaking, keen-chinned, curly-haired and tanned to a rosy brown. Even beneath his silk pajamas you could see how tall he was, and

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He found himself looking straight into the eyes of the Triangle girl, whose breath was coming quick and fast.

how broad his shoulders were; and when he raised his hand to flick his cigarette over the receiver, his biceps rippled under the silk like honeydew melons flexing themselves in the sunshine.

("Ah-ha!" thought Mell in his dream. "How strong I am this morning!")

Reaching up, he raised the ceiling with the flat of his hands; and then without half trying, he leaped from one end of the bedroom to the other—a good half-mile it was, if an inch. He jumped back over the furniture into bed again, and somewhere in the distance an orchestra started playing Mr. Mendelssohn's "Spring Song" with humming obbligato and mellow saxophone.

"Sire," said the footman, bowing low for the third time, "the young lady is here."

("Ah-ha!" thought Mell in his dream. "This is going to be good.")

Now, dreams, as everyone knows, practically always go by contraries—fat men flying and shy men bold as brass; so please don't get a wrong idea of poor Mell Dawley, even when in his dream he said to the footman with a touch of impatience: "All right, Dumb-bell; what are you waiting for? Show the young lady in!"

The footman disappeared, and presently there was such a racket at the door!

"Rap-rap-rap! Rap-rap-rap!"

"Come in!" Mell tried to say, but knew he was making no sound.

"Rap-rap-rap!" This upon the door again. "Rap-rap-rap!"

"Come in!" Mell tried to shout, and tried so hard that the effort woke him—and oh, but didn't he feel badly when he thought of the room which had just been his, and the scene

which now surrounded him. Instead of his dream-world *lit de luxe*, he was on an iron cot—its mattress apparently stuffed with the same material, unsoftened as yet by rust; and the room was so small that if Mell had attempted to spring from the cot he would immediately have bumped his head so hard against the opposite wall that he would have sprung no more that day.

But it wasn't the size of the room as much as the decorations which made Mell feel so badly.

The paper on the wall was a bilious brown, covered with medallions the color of Prometheus's liver, this liver torn away here and there, and the rest of the paper, so high up, marked with splotches where previous tenants had sat with the backs of their heads against it, possibly pondering over that great riddle which is sometimes called Life. Or they might have sat there staring up at the ceiling, which looked as though the room upstairs was occupied by an amateur juggler—an embryo Will


She came in—tight-faced and cold of eye, a false brown bang over her forehead which gave her, at first sight, a grotesque appearance of youth. But the moment she spoke, one knew that an Old Bird was speaking—a grim Old Bird who had been soured by Man, and wasn't to be caught by pinches of salt, no matter where they were sprinkled.

"I've come for the rent," she said.

"For the rent?" repeated Mell, blinking behind his glasses at the directness of the attack.

"Yes."

"Well, now, I'm sorry," said he, "but to tell you the truth—in fact," he continued, trying to look as ingenuous as any young man can look, lying in bed with his glasses on and the counterpane held up to his chin, "I was going to ask you this morning if you would mind trusting me for a week or two—that is, you understand, until I can get something to do and pay you back.



Mell saw that the bear had a cast in one of its eyes and a chip off the side of its nose.

Fields—who was everlastingly trying to do a balancing trick with three cups of coffee, but could never quite make it. This had turned Mell's ceiling into a study in geography. One caught outlines of peninsulas and estuaries, archipelagoes and isthmuses, all done in sepia and changing slowly from day to day—the dagger-thrust of Cape Horn near the window, the voluptuous curves of Africa just over his head. But it was the mirror in the dresser at the foot of the cot which had the most fun. Whether or not Old Nick had cast that glass, no one could look at it without hating himself and feeling that the best thing he could do would be to go right out and jump in the river, for the sneaking, worthless, jaundiced creature that he was.

"Good Lord!" sighed Mell, shutting his eyes so hard that his lids trembled a little. "Why couldn't I go on dreaming?"

Which is, indeed, a very common complaint of mankind.

"Rap-rap-rap!" This once more upon the door. "Mr. Dawley!"

"That's what woke me up," thought Mell, and his heart sank lower yet. "She's come for the money." And aloud in a false, cheerful voice, he added: "Is that you, Mrs. Rodler?"

"Yes! I would like to speak to you a moment, please."

"Just a second." Mell slipped out of bed—an ineffectual little figure in his yellowish nightshirt; and first putting on his eyeglasses to give himself assurance, and dangling the black tape over his ear, he unfastened the hook which held the door. "Just a second!" he warningly repeated, and slipped back into his cot again, drawing the counterpane up to his chin and glancing down to see if his feet were covered—he who had been so bold in his dream. "All right!" he called out then. "Come in!"

Although, of course, your kindness, Mrs. Rodler—I would never be able to pay that back."

She shed the salt as a duck sheds water—didn't even seem to know that any had been sprinkled on her.

"What is your work, Mr. Dawley?" she asked.

Mell had seen the time when he would have proudly answered, "Accountant," but since his experiences of the previous eighteen months, he would never be able even to see that word again without a feeling of numbness deep inside him. So instead of the prouder word, he answered humbly enough, "Bookkeeper," and trying to speak in a more cheerful strain, he added: "Oh, I'm sure to find work soon now. Got to, you know. Good thing for you, in a way, that you aren't boarding me as well, Mrs. Rodler. Got to go out and earn my breakfast now before I can eat it. Ha-ha-ha!"

If he had hoped to melt her, he was soon disillusioned of that.

"Mr. Dawley," she said, "I have my own rent to pay to-morrow. I will give you until six o'clock tonight. If you haven't the money by then, I shall have to rent this room to some one else, and you will find your things downstairs in the basement."

She went then—one of the Fates in a false brown bang; and after a few moments of indecision, Mell got up, already sick in spirit at what he knew the day would bring him. For nearly two months he had been trying to land a job, Bookkeeper, Office Assistant, Salesman, Man—lately even Boy Wanted, for which he had promised himself he would shave the slight mustache which shadowed his upper lip and deduct ten years from his age, if only his applications were answered. At first he had started the search blithely enough, answering ads, advertising himself, rising early to get the morning papers, writing as many as

Government are treated, and what work he had been given to do, and whether or not he had reduced his time by good behavior, Mell had always known when he walked out that the verdict had been "thumbs down"—that he might as well have saved his breath to blow bubbles up to the moon.

"If I wasn't such a little shrimp—" he sighed to himself as he slowly dressed that morning.

And indeed he was small—small, too, with that ineffectual air which marks some little men, especially when they are blonds,



and inclined to be shy and pale, with rather prominent lips and near-sighted eyes that looked at the world from behind heavy lenses as though wondering what in the name of an all-wise Heaven the riddle was all about. But in spite of his lack of inches, Mell had, for the past few weeks, seeing his last dollar marching nearer and nearer with

relentless tread, tried for other jobs as well as the clerical ones—Porter, Watchman, Stock-runner, Shipping Clerk, even Laborer. But every time he had been asked to call, they either took one look at him and told him the job was filled, or else they said, h-m—they would let him know in a day or two; and that, as every applicant knows, is generally that.

Mell had just finished dressing, and was straightening the room, when his eyes chanced to fall on a story in the newspaper which he was folding.

"A Day with a Push-cart," it was called.

"Perhaps I'll be selling post-cards, or mouse-traps, or something like that, before long," he told himself with a wry smile; and before he knew it, he was reading the reporter's experiences as a push-cart peddler, selling paper-bound editions of the classics, with sidelines of neckties and vanity-cases. It was a good article, and Mell found himself smiling more than once, his own troubles forgotten for a few blessed minutes in another's strange adventures.

"I wonder how much he got for writing that," Mell presently found himself thinking when the story was finished. And then: "I—I wonder if I was to write a story, 'How I Tried for a Job,' and brought out the interesting bits, and the funny bits, the way this man does—even if I only got a dollar or two for it, it would buy me something to eat."

The more he thought it over, the more the idea grew upon him. Of course he mustn't write it in a tragic vein—but there

twenty applications a day—"Dear Sirs: Replying to your advertisement in this morning's paper—" Mell could run it off in his sleep, all the way to, "Trusting to have the pleasure of hearing from you, I remain—"

A doubtful pleasure, however, and not often enjoyed, at that.

"What previous experience have you had, Mr. Dawley?" And after a while: "You can give a bond, of course?"

At first Mell had told the whole story—how unwittingly he had signed the balance sheet which had been his undoing; and although they were nearly all curious to know how guests of the

was that office-boy who had been smoking his boss' pipe in the noon hour, and the peddler who sold mechanical mice to facetious office-assistants in offices where young ladies were employed, and the hat-shop which apparently advertised for salesmen—" \$30, easy hours"—in order that the steady stream of applicants would not only give the store an appearance of prosperity, but might also now and then buy hats.

"Darned if I don't try it!" thought Mell, rumination suddenly fusing into decision. "I ought to get it done by noon anyhow, so it won't be much time lost."

IT was nearly one o'clock when Mell finally brought his story to a close. He read it over then, and like the curate and his egg, he thought some parts of it excellent.

"And even if they only use the good bits," he told himself as he stood in the waiting-room of the New York *Star's* editorial office half an hour later, "maybe I'll get enough to eat."

Now, the literary editor of the New York *Star* that year happened to be one of the world's elect—curly-haired and blue-eyed, and everlastingly trying to hide himself behind a gruff way of speaking which didn't even deceive the babies. He only had one aversion, and that was to horn-rimmed spectacles, and he only had one ambition, and that was to be the managing editor of the *Star*.

"You write this?" he gruffly demanded, when Mell had been brought in to him.

"Yes sir," said Mell.

"Mmm! Copied from some old paper, I suppose?"

"No sir. My own experiences. Changed a little here and there, of course."

"How do you mean—changed?"

"I mean the sad parts left out."

"Mmm! How is it you couldn't get a job? You look to me like an intelligent young fellow. You haven't got those damned horn rims on your glasses."

It was probably the editor's curly hair that did it—that and the golden heart of him, shining like a harvest moon through the gruffness of his speech.

"I've been in jail," said Mell in a low voice.

"Jail? Good! What for?"

"I was working for an accounting firm that made a specialty of reducing income-taxes. And I swore to a balance sheet for one of our customers—without verifying all the figures."

"Teach you to be more careful next time. Heh! All right, son; guess we can use this—about a column of it, anyway. Aren't broke, are you?"

"Just about," nodded Mell, in a lower voice than before.

"Fine! Most interesting condition in the world! Give you an order on the cashier for this; and if you have any other good stories,—good ones, mind you,—bring them in."

When Mell left the cashier's grill a few minutes later, he had eight dollars in his pocket; but more than that, he had a ray of hope in that part of the human frame which is generally called the heart—a ray of hope which nevertheless warmed his stomach and cheered his mind and tied a flock of toy balloons to each of his Number Sevens. "Four for Mrs. Rodler and four for me," he told himself as he sailed on through the air.

Eight dollars for a morning's work. Not bad! He would only have to turn out one a day, and that was forty-eight dollars a week—"How It Feels to Be in Jail," "How It Feels to Get Out of Jail," "How It Feels to Be Broke in New York."

"I'll get a room with a desk in it pretty soon," he told himself as he headed for the nearest restaurant, "a nice, big room with an open fireplace and bookshelves; and as soon as I get a few hundred dollars ahead—"

He entered the restaurant with shining eyes. One doesn't necessarily have to be asleep in order to dream.

EVERY morning for a week Mell tried to repeat his first success; and every afternoon Charles Peter Hooper—he of the curly hair and gruff voice—held coroner's inquest over Mell's efforts and always delivered the same verdict.

"Rotten!" On the sixth day he gruffly added: "You get worse. First thing you know, you'll be writing pieces on, 'How It Feels to Be a Worm,' and then I shall get right up and step on you."

"I didn't think much of that last one myself," confessed Mell, looking at his manuscript on "How It Feels to Be a Lobster," with a sorrowful eye. "But honestly, I thought my jail story was pretty good—the one you turned down Tuesday."

"Not for our readers, it wasn't any good," said the literary

Charles. "Wouldn't hit 'em where they live because they never expect to be in jail. That's the trouble with this story. Our readers aren't lobsters—see? They're all Wise Guys—Clever Hombres—Damned Smart People. You'd be surprised. At least, I know I am."

"But you took the first story," gently protested Mell, "the one about trying to get a job."

"Sure I took it. Because why? Because nearly all our clever readers have got jobs—and if anything happened to separate them from their jobs, and the delicatessen shops refused them credit, they'd starve to death, the biggest part of them, inside of thirty days, or else be sitting on park benches, swiping the squirrels' peanuts. Gosh, now, boy, there's a story for you—if you only know how to handle it."

"Where?" asked Mell, blinking behind his glasses.

"Park benches. Real true-to-life hard-luck stories. You're the Inquiring Reporter—see? You wait till they're set for the night—a bunch of interesting-looking bums; and then you work on down the line, and ask 'em how they got that way."

"But would they tell me?"

"Sure they'd tell you. Anybody will tell you his hard-luck story, if you'll only stop and listen. *Apologia Mea Vita*—or haven't you got that far yet?"

Some of this was Greek to Mell—it pleased the literary Charles at times to speak in cryptics; but at least the practical part was plain enough. He was to find a line of down-and-outs, lodging for the night on park benches, and he was to try to get a story about the reasons which had brought them there.

"Madison Square was a good place once," was the editor's parting advice, "but Bryant Park would probably suit you better. Shadow of the library, and all that. And I think you'll find a higher class of bums there, too."

So Mell dined frugally on three bananas and thought to himself, "Well, anyhow, they can't pick my pockets," and when it became dark enough and late enough, so that the transients had moved on and only the permanent guests remained, Mell rose from the bench where he had been sitting in Bryant Park and proceeded to interview his colleagues.

THE first was a little old man with a battered derby and a coat-collar so shiny that it looked as though it had been polished with shoe-blackening. He needed a shave, and he needed a collar and tie; but if he had been properly groomed and dressed, he might easily have passed for a successful business man—a master baker, say, who had accumulated millions by putting six raisins in each of his loaves of raisin bread.

"Pardon me, sir," said Mell, going to the back of the bench and tapping him gently on the shoulder, "but I am a reporter on the New York *Star*, and I am getting a number of hard-luck stories. Now it seems to me that you might be able to tell a good one,—what brought you here tonight and all that,—if you would care to oblige the public to that extent."

"How much?" asked the little old man, perking his head on one side, like a woodpecker suddenly waking from sleep and thinking he heard his breakfast stirring behind the bark.

"I beg your pardon?"

"I say—how much? How much is there in it for me?"

"Oh, nothing at all," said Mell with gentle decision. "You either tell or you don't tell. It all goes in to make the story, you know."

He moved to the next one, a tall, frowning man with a saturnine expression and his hands thrust deep in his trousers pockets—the sign of a benchman who still has a watch or money, such and as much as it is. He too needed a shave, and shoes, and various things; but if he had been properly tricked out, he might easily have passed for a successful lawyer—a lawyer, say, who had made a fortune by looking at the world with a piercing eye, and speaking in a bossy voice whenever he knew he was wrong.

"I was too honest," he frowned when Mell had finished. "Trusted my friend, and trusted my wife. Got no friend now, and got no wife. To hell with everybody!"

Mell's heart soared at that—a tragedy in a breath, a grand apotheosis in four words. He moved on to the next one.

He was bulbous of face and ditto of stomach—the latter projecting into space in a perfect hemisphere, so that if it had slowly revolved, it might have served for one of those globes of the earth which are sometimes seen in shadowy corners of a recitation-room. He too needed a shave, and needed a wash—and when Mell leaned over him, it became apparent that a bath wouldn't have hurt him, either; but if he had been properly cleansed and costumed, he might (Continued on page 90)

Dorrance had the anxiety of a man in love with a woman much younger than himself.

Little Sister of the Bridge

by
Maude Radford Warren

Illustrated by C. D. Williams

HERE is another of Maude Radford Warren's revealing tales of today's girlhood. Nearly every college town has its Coralie Waldon, but not all the Coralies are lucky enough to have a younger sister of the fiber of Sue. The author is well acquainted with college towns, and the life of them, for she lives in one herself.

CORALIE WALDON stood beside her sister, young Sue, on the porch of the Waldon house, her chin held high, her deep-blue eyes fixed on the springing arches of the wide elms that looked, under a snowy sky, like cold iron. Coralie conveyed to the beholder the sense of beauty, which is a different thing from being merely beautiful, and a bigger thing. Young Sue, little, slim and agile, cuddled to her sister like a kitten.

"Going out, Coralie?" she asked. "But it's almost dark. Are you blue, or something? You've been so quiet all day—"

"Blue? Not a bit. I've just been getting bored. Do you think you could run the house alone if I flew off to New York for a few days? I'm so sick of everything here."

"Of course," said Sue.

Coralie thought Sue's tone was relieved. She smiled rather bitterly, as she said: "Run in—you're shivering. I'll be back presently."

Coralie went quickly down the steps and turned out of the

gateway into Clinton Street, making toward the house of her Aunt Minnie Swayne. She walked triumphantly, but that was a pose born of long habit. She gazed down in the valley and the lake, and across them up at the hill opposite, like a queen surveying her domain. But as she turned into Aunt Minnie Swayne's gateway, she reflected that for the first time since she had known that she had the power to charm, she was feeling dashed, uncertain, even afraid.

Mrs. Swayne met her favorite niece with a joyous embrace. She was a small, plump, well-dressed woman, recently married for the second time, and making the best of her second blooming.

"I was just about to telephone you," she said, pushing Coralie into a gay chair in the living-room, which had very obviously been lately redecorated. "I want you to be one of a bridge-party for tomorrow night."

"You do?" Coralie's tone was bitter. "No one but married people, I suppose? Some man whose wife is away will be my partner?"

"Why, no," said Mrs. Swayne briskly; "the men aren't all married. There's Marston Wheeler, and there's Dick Dorrance."

"One a widower of thirty-five with three young devils of children," Coralie said, her eyes gleaming so fiercely that her aunt also looked for the phenomenon of gritted teeth. "And Dick Dorrance, forty, if he's a day. I'm sick of bachelors, and widowers looking for their seconds."

Mrs. Swayne changed from a bright armchair to a somber rocker, and swayed rapidly back and forth. This, with her, was always a sign of perturbation.

"It's two tables," she said uncertainly, "and the fourth man is—"

"Let me ask your advice," said Coralie, "—or, no, let me tell



"Thursday," he whispered, "—that's the day my wife always goes down to Long Island to see her mother."

you— Oh, Aunt Minnie, I'm so miserable, so recently miserable."

Mrs. Swayne shot from her rocking-chair and crooned over her niece. "What is it, dear? Tell Aunt Minnie."

"It's—it's—I just seem to have waked up—that's all. It's a curse for a girl in a college town to be born with good looks."

"I don't see what you mean," said Mrs. Swayne; "you've always had a wonderful time—"

"I used to have a wonderful time," said Coralie savagely; "and because, from grammar-school days, the boys have flocked around me, I supposed I always should have a wonderful time. And now—no one has invited me to the Assembly Ball. Of course, I might have counted on Dick Dorrance—only when I refused his invitation last year, he said that as I had turned down his invitations for five successive years, he wouldn't ask me again."

The Assembly Ball was one of the great events of the year in the college town of which Coralie had unconsciously considered herself one of the chief ornaments. All the people of the little city who mattered socially, and all the college students whose fathers could afford some fifty dollars for an evening's entertainment, went once a year to a ball which could compete in charm and extravagance with any which a metropolis could encompass.

"Last night," went on Coralie, "I heard my young sister Sue— Sue, whom I've always thought of as about fifteen—arranging with her latest suitor for the making up of a party for the Assembly. 'You pick out one of

the boys to take Coralie,' she said; and Aunt Minnie, he hemmed and hawed, and then he told her that when a man was spending as much as the Assembly Ball came to, in subscriptions and all, he wanted to take out a younger girl, some one of his own generation. You don't know how those words dug into me— Some one of his own generation!"

"Dear, dear!" muttered Mrs. Swayne, going back to her rocking-chair. "Well, Coralie, it's really very hard on a girl to belong to a college town. I mean as to getting married—"

"Oh, getting married," sighed Coralie, "that's the worst of being popular! You think you can get married any time, and then you wake up as I have—"

She buried her face in her hands.

"When I was a girl," said Mrs. Swayne gently, "there was a proverb the older women used to quote to the pretty girls who weren't in a hurry to marry: that they would loiter through the woods and pick up a crooked stick at the end."

Coralie nodded. "I've heard that, but I never thought it would apply to me."

"You see," commented Mrs. Swayne, "the young men in college aren't able to marry. They have their careers in mind and no money of their own. Half of them come here engaged anyway—"



"All I know," Coralie said, "is that all of a sudden I have waked up to find that from the standpoint of the students, I am a college widow, going about with men younger than myself; and from the standpoint of you married folks, I am a little sister of the bridge-table, to be fitted in when you need an extra girl, or want some one to match your widowers or seasoned bachelors. Well, I'm not going to stand it."

"What are you going to do?" asked Mrs. Swayne doubtfully.

"Go away. I told Sue casually that I was going to New York for a visit. What I shall do when I get there is to look for a job. I just can't stay here and face failure."

"But Coralie, dear, nothing has changed," urged her aunt. "Everyone knows that the only eligible men in town for you are Dick Dorrance and Marston Wheeler. You've made fun of all the nice young business men you could have married, teased them about being Rotarians, made them think you considered them not good enough. Everyone assumes that you are going to choose either Marston or Dick."

Coralie sprang from her chair. "Have you older people been talking me over? Am I the only person in the place that hasn't realized my plight? It's time I went away. As to Marston Wheeler, those three little girls of his are minxes. They'd plague me to death. And they're as pretty as pictures. I'd be jealous of them when they grew up. And if I came to love their father, I'd be jealous of their own mother. No—no widower for me."

"And Dick?"

"Dick—he's been awfully spoiled by women. And he's fourteen years older than I am. Ten years from now, when I wanted to dance, he'd want to doze. What does that expression on your face mean?"

"I'd rather not say," murmured Mrs. Swayne.

Coralie uttered a strangled little cry.

"Oh, I know—you mean I am still talking like a spoiled beauty who can choose, and I *am* talking that way; I *am*!"

She gazed at her aunt with the miserable eyes of one coming to self-knowledge. She dropped into a bright chintz-covered chair and said:

"This is dreadful, Aunt Minnie. I haven't thought at all of getting married, because I wanted the good times that married women don't seem to have. Oh, I know, there are probably compensations, but their life isn't one prolonged courtship. I adore being made love to—only I just begin to realize that the students I've been playing around with don't make love to me, except maybe some of the law students; they just talk about themselves. And the only two that do make love to me are Dick Dorrance and Marston Wheeler—two shop-worn men; and I suppose Marston mainly because he's got to have a mother for his three imps."

"Well, I suppose you have enjoyed your freedom," Mrs. Swayne said.

"I don't know what use I've made of it," reflected Coralie gloomily. "Yes, I've got to run away from defeat of one sort to defeat of another. I'll get a job in New York."

"There are plenty of men in New York," Mrs. Swayne said; "and like all other male creatures, they run after pretty girls. Here the town is used to your good looks. Perhaps it would be as well to give New York a treat. But don't take a job. Go to New York on a visit—"

"Yes, but I don't know anyone to visit—"

"One moment. Sometime ago in this conversation you in-

terrugged me when I was about to say who was to be our eighth at bridge. It's my husband's nephew, Archie Colton. I suppose you must have met him. He was graduated here eight years ago, when you were eighteen."

"Oh," said Coralie, slowly brightening, "of course, I remember Archie Colton. I didn't know him very well. I was only a freshman, and therefore the dirt under his feet. But I remember how handsome he was, and how many girls were crazy about him."

"He's as handsome as ever. He's coming down here for the week-end on some alumni business, and his week-end includes the night of the Assembly Ball. I'll see that he takes you. He'll be delighted."

"Yesterday I should have said so," murmured Coralie.

"You may say so today. For mercy's sake, don't get an inferiority complex. Remember that you'll not be an old story to New York. I meant to ask you in any case to go with me to New York next week. We'll have a fortnight in a hotel. Meantime you will have made some contacts, and you can stay two weeks more. At the end of that time you'll know whether you want to work in New York or not."

They looked at each other with calm, candid eyes. Each read the other clearly. Mrs. Swayne's mind said to Coralie:

"Archie Colton's about the proper age to marry. He's doubtless to be caught by skillful hands. It's time you married, my dear. If you don't, you'll be a fixture at the bridge-table—some one for wives to resent a little—and rely on. Some one who needn't be considered very deeply. A beauty who failed to seize the flying hour. Take the chance I offer."

And Coralie's distressed spirit said to Mrs. Swayne:

"Yes, I suppose I want to fall in love and marry. I have, up to now, suited the taste of men without altering my own. I have pleased without trying to please. I want for a husband a wonderful person, handsome, rich, unswervingly devoted to me. Yes, of course, I'll be glad to meet Archie Colton. Let me dwell on that, rather than on a job in New York."

The two parted, and Coralie walked slowly along the street in the crisp January air. A scarlet and orange sunset was slowly giving way to twilight, and deep shadows blued the snow. The trunks of the elms and oaks were ice-covered. A few cold stars were appearing. Coralie had always taken Nature as a hospitable background for herself, but now she felt in the evening something inhospitable, even hostile.

As she walked, she passed students going in groups and singly. Two girls went in front of her, wearing heavy trench-coats on which were their initials, and in black, red and blue, two feminine faces, with heart-shaped mouths. The day before, Coralie would have taken this innocent spectacular bid for conspicuousness as a piece of amusing nonsense perpetrated by a contemporary. Now she smiled a weary, aged smile. She felt a hundred years older than these giggling girls. Where had so suddenly vanished her sense of first, inexhaustible youth?

She bent her chin into her fur collar with a little shiver of fear and loneliness. When she looked up, it was to see approaching a tall man in a fur coat. As he passed a street-lamp, she saw that it was Dorrance. She had a quick vision of his dark eyes, his curling black hair with touches of gray, his amiable slow smile. That was the Dorrance she had known ever since she was born. But in the light of her recent feeling, every man she met seemed to her a different person. She must look at Dorrance now, not as a giggler of eighteen, not like the girls swinging in front of her, but rather as a girl beyond the middle twenties whose market was not necessarily waiting for her.

As he paused beside her, she thought that he did not look forty, and that forty was not so old, after all. He was attractive; she could see how women would always like him. Gossip had it that they had always liked him too well, that sometimes he almost had had to take sanctuary. But that, Coralie had always supposed, must be his past history. At forty were men ardently sought, while girls of twenty-six were beginning to feel anxious? Was this, as she had sometimes heard, a man's world? She had always taken it for granted that it was Coralie Waldon's world.

"Hello, Dick, sole prop of my declining years!" she called with an ironic inward smile. Maybe he would be her sole prop, for all she knew.

"Why are you roaming in the gloaming?" he asked, falling into step beside her. "I don't remember having ever met you at twilight before—at least not alone. I associate you with companions and with strong sunlight."

"Perhaps," sighed Coralie, "I was in a twilight mood. You might, to save time, make love to me, Dick."

"I think I won't," he said softly.



Coralie laughed. She had fallen easily into her old line with him, and for the moment she had forgotten her recent perturbations. She was again the tranquil beauty, sure of the perpetual devotion of men.

"Why so parsimonious, Dick? Isn't it your day to make love? See what a chance I give you to tell me that every day is your day for making love to me!"

"We both know the patter pretty well, don't we?" he asked. "Still, I think I won't make love to you this evening, Coralie."

"But if you don't, what are we going to talk about?" she said. "So little happens here, and we exhausted our gossip last night at the University Club dinner. It's too dark for us to read together, and it would look queer to do it on the street. So what is left, except for you to make love to me?"

"We could tell each other what we really think about things," he said, his tone enigmatic.

"I've either known you too long for that, or not long enough," Coralie said, "to say nothing of the fact that I can't imagine your being interested in what I've been thinking about lately."

"Which may mean," he said, "that I would be only too much interested."

Coralie again laughed, this time with real pleasure. In spite of Dorrance's lamentable forty years, he was quick on the uptake. She reflected that he never bored her except when she remembered his age, and, she added with a sigh, forgot her own.

"But you're fighting away from my question," Coralie said, sinking her chin closer into her furs, and looking up at him with a provocative little pout. "Why aren't you going to make love to me this evening, Dick?"

He halted. "Do you really want to know?"

"But of course," she said, and she was annoyed that her heart was quickening a bit. After all, she wasn't yet a hag. She was used to these flirtatious passages and would have many more before she reached the dead-line where Dorrance had already ar-



"Coralie, dear," Sue said steadily, "before you came in, Archie was kissing me."

rived. Why should she be so thrilled over waiting to see what he was going to say next?

"I'm not going to make love to you this evening," he said, "because, you know, some of these days I might really come to be in love with you."

Coralie suppressed a gasp. What did he mean? She had taken it for granted that he was in love with her, and that she was parrying, heading off a proposal as a nice girl should, who doesn't mean to accept a middle-aged suitor. But could it be that he wasn't in love with her at all? Could it be that, after years and years of flirtation with girls, some of whom were now married, with youthful flappers of their own, he actually was not in love with young—or at least youngish—Coralie Waldon? Or was he giving her an opening so that she could lead him on to a proposal? The latter she did not, just at present, want to hear.

"Well, that's a nicely turned speech," she said lightly; "and perhaps it is just as well so to turn it, because here we come to my gateway, and lovemaking does take a bit of time. I won't ask you to come in, because I've got to see that the table is properly set. We've a guest for dinner."

She nodded lightly and passed through the gateway. At the door she turned and watched him walking briskly down the street, hands in pockets, head thrown back, whistling. Hardly the pose for a lover, she decided.

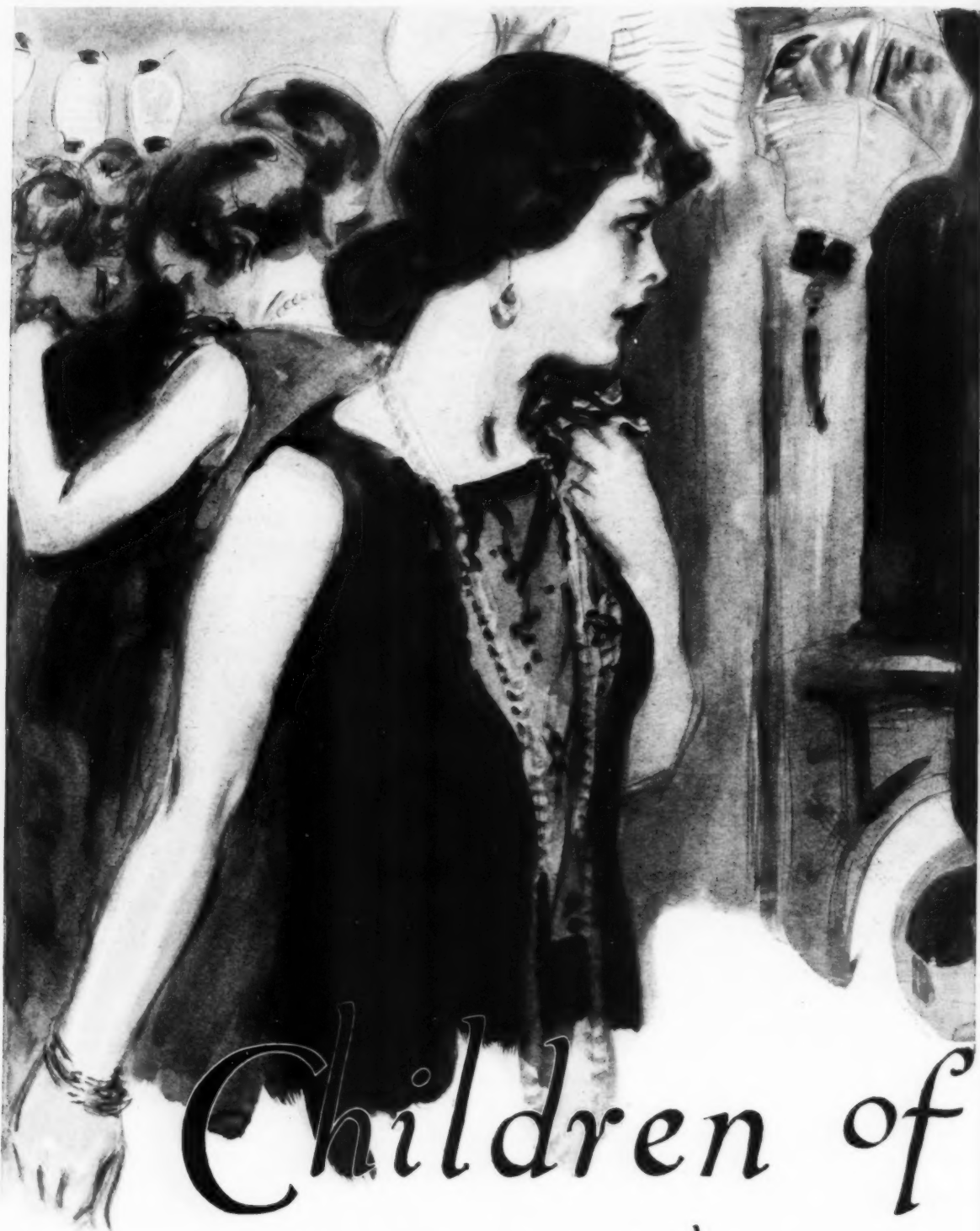
The guest she expected was her widower friend Marston Wheeler. Of his intentions there was no doubt, she reflected, as she sat between him and her dreamy father, opposite the pretty, blonde young Sue. Coralie was wearing a blue velvet gown that emphasized the color of her eyes. Sue, wishing to compliment her, had made her uncomfortable by telling her that no one seeing her in that dress would guess she was a day over twenty-three. Coralie had supposed she looked about twenty.

Wheeler was a stout blond man in the middle thirties, with keen, appraising eyes and a reticent manner. Whenever he looked at Coralie, his eyes gleamed. But so did they when he looked at the appetizing food before him. As he bent his head over his plate, young Sue made wicked gestures of worship.

"I've got to change that," Coralie reflected; "if I come to marry Marston, I mustn't let anyone assume that he could by any possibility be made ridiculous. I wonder if he would consent to send the children away to school—that eldest youngster, anyhow. I wonder if he has money enough. Oh, dear, where has my common-sense been the last six years?"

Wheeler suddenly recollected that he had not spoken for three minutes; he liked to eat a real steak in silence, but then, he was a guest.

"With whom are you going to the Assembly Ball?" he asked Coralie. "How I wish I knew how to dance!" (Continued on page 127)



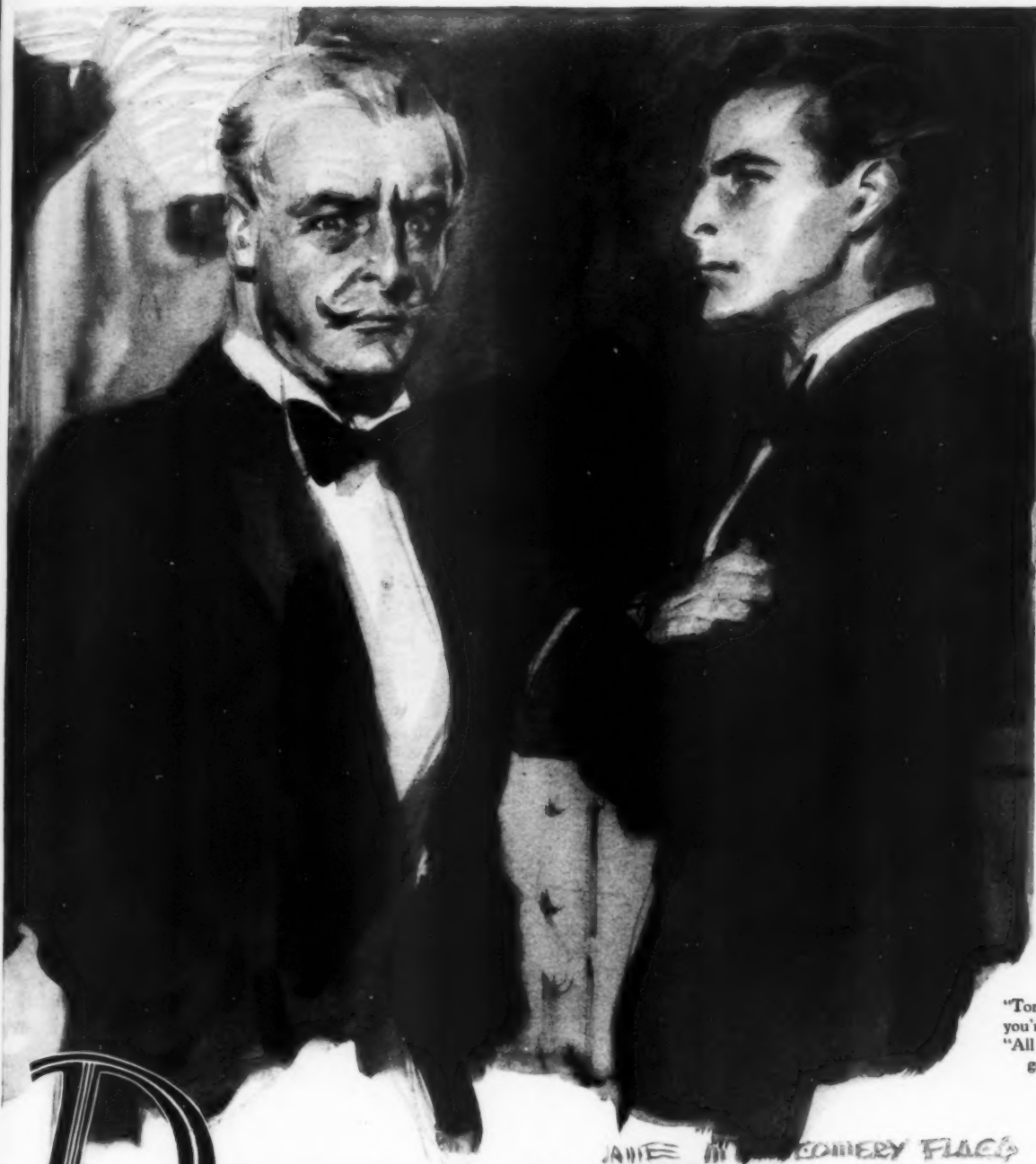
Children of

by Owen Johnson

Illustrated
by
James
Montgomery
Flagg

HAVING completed this novel,—the most important he has produced since his famous “*The Salamander*,”—Owen Johnson has gone to France, there to write a number of short tales that, on completion of the serial publication of “*Children of Divorce*,” will begin to appear—to the delight, one is sure, of his many eager readers.

The
W
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"Tom Larrabee,
you're a beast."
"All right—but
get out."

DIVORCE

The Story So Far:

WEALTHY Jean Waddington looked forward to marriage as something very real, very vital, something about which she must make no mistake. For she had suffered much from those who had looked upon marriage as something casual, who had made mistakes: her father and mother. They had been divorced, Jean's father and mother, when she was a little girl, and each had remarried; and as neither was minded to give her up to the other, she had been brought up in a convent in Italy.

At fourteen Jean had come back to America, and on the boat she had met and liked Ted Larrabee—big, good-humored, sincere and serious-minded then. And Ted too was a child of divorce,

for Colonel Larrabee's political enemies had "framed him" with a chorus-girl scandal, and his mother had seized the excuse the affair gave her.

Jean went first to her father—and found her stepmother impossible. And her own mother, now Mrs. Chastaine, had no desire to have her style in flirtation cramped by the presence of an all-but-grown-up daughter. So Jean finished her education in boarding-schools well away from her parents, and afterward in very modern fashion lived in a separate ménage of her own.

It was long before Jean saw Ted Larrabee again, for the war intervened and he enlisted at once with the Canadian forces. And he had come home a different Ted, eager for relaxation, his serious young ambitions to be a great engineer forgotten. When he proposed to Jean, she put him off: she must make no mistake

in her marriage. Other suitors, moreover, especially the attorney Daggett, were usually in evidence. And then—Jean's father died, leaving almost his entire great fortune to her.

Ted helped her nobly through the trying days of her father's illness and death, but when it was all over, he drew away, spent his time with gay companions like Charley Lancaster and Kitty Flanders. Pride held him from appearing as a fortune-hunter; and the responsibilities of wealth preoccupied Jean to an extent. Finally when Jean tried to reawaken his old ambitions, a break came. "I will never understand that you could love me and say such things!" Jean protested. Ted made answer: "I guess we can't understand each other. . . . You'll marry some one with brains, and you'll feel more charitable some day." (*The story continues in detail:*)

Chapter Nineteen

LARRABEE'S first reaction was one of relief. "Well, the tooth is out. That's over," he said to himself grimly as they drove back. He derived a little satisfaction from the way he had handled himself. He had faced the other guests calmly, much more calmly than Jean, in fact, whose face had a tell-tale gravity that was unmistakable. He'd played the game.

Kitty at his side was bubbling along, serving up the party in caricature. Kitty, in fact, had never ceased to chatter, from the moment she and Daggett had come upon them on the beach. He felt grateful that she asked no questions, didn't try any of the sympathy stuff on him, let him alone. Rather understanding. The look in Jean's eyes had hurt. Difficult moment, that, saying good-by casually, with everyone crowding around. But he had carried it off. How much did she care? He wondered. Probably relieved, at heart. Curious thing, a woman. When you tell them what's in their own minds, they resent it. She might have made it a little easier for him. It was hard enough, and it would be harder. No doubt about that. He would have to keep a tight rein on himself.

"Suppose she thinks I'll go to pieces for a while."

None of that. No sir! That's one thing he'd take care of. No weakness. He wasn't going to give her cause to pity him—Jean or anyone else!

"What time does the big shebang begin, Ted?"

He heard Mrs. Bolton's thin voice calling him. He frowned. What was she talking about, anyhow?

"The party tonight, at your father's."

(Kitty's low prompting.)

"Oh, yes. About ten o'clock."

"Oh, I do hope it will be frightfully improper."

"And you're ready to help a lot, aren't you, dear?"—Kitty again to the rescue.

Well, he'd have to tell his father. That didn't worry him much. The Governor would understand. His mother? That was different. She'd be terribly broken up. He foresaw scenes, reproaches. Best perhaps to run off somewhere for a while—shooting trip or a cruise. Not too soon, though—not to give the appearance of running away.

When they returned, there were trays of cocktails. Cocktails went through the Standings' home like the migrations of birds. He drank sparingly, a bracer or two, but cautiously, firm in his resolve to avoid any let-down.

Her photograph was on his bureau when he started to dress. He closed the folder and put it away.

"Wonder if it will be Daggett," he thought. He started to sing loudly.

"What the devil are you so happy about?" said Charley Lancaster, peering round the door.

"Tuning up for the party, old top."

"Too many respectable women for me."

"What do you mean by respectability?"

"Well, you know. Where's it going to be? On the old ferry-boat?"

"Sure thing."

AS they drove up, the party was in full swing. Kitty and Mrs. Bolton gave little shrieks of amazement.

"For heaven's sakes, it's coming at us!"

"Am I seeing things?"

Through the woods abruptly the illuminated sheen of a ferry-boat, windows ablaze, red light and green light above. Negro melodies with low jazz accompaniment. Kitty's hand clutched his arm as a traveling shaft of light fell full upon them.

"But Ted, it's a real ferry-boat!"

"It's real enough. One of the old man's crazy notions. Jump out here. We'll never get through this mass of cars. It's funnier when you get to it."

Colonel Larrabee, in captain's uniform, was at the curved bow receiving his guests as they came up the gangway.

"Hello, Ted, you ruffian! Come aboard." He clung to Mrs. Bolton with one hand while he gave the other to Mrs. Standing. "Didn't know there were so many pretty women in the world. Where do you pick them up? First time you've been on the good ship *High Jinks*? Great idea, isn't it?" He enjoyed their exclamations of astonishment, pleased as a boy. In front, a springboard extended over a black mass of water shot with brilliant reflections. "That's a swimming pool—little chilly tonight. Can't tell, though, what may happen with this crowd." He gave Mrs. Bolton's hand a final pressure. "Don't forget my name when I come around, will you?"

Mrs. Bolton, with a play of eyes, vowed she would be waiting.

"Ted, how be you?"

"Fine, Governor. How be you?"

"Take the ladies to the bar and see they're treated right. What was the name of that pretty little woman?"

"Mrs. Bolton. Just divorced."

"And quite right, too! A perfect little darling." He turned to new arrivals, welcoming them with his expansive smile, his boisterous good humor, his rough-and-ready hospitality. "Hello, Lindy. Who's that glorious woman tucked under your arm? Come aboard—come aboard, everybody."

"Why, Ted, he's a darling. I'm just crazy about your father." Kitty began to laugh. "It's the most excruciatingly funny resemblance I ever saw. You're alike as two peas!"

"So they say."

He took her remark moodily. The allusion was not a happy one just then, not with the day's memories behind him. He followed the party inside, past the lunch-bar, where broiled lobsters and steamed clams were being displayed by white-capped chefs, on to the dance-floor, where he did his duty punctiliously, then moved through the dancers, greeted by a dozen acquaintances.

The crowd was Bohemian—a most convenient phrase to cover the various elements which thronged together under a social flag of truce. There was a smattering of society, women of every world and no world at all, actresses in vogue, screen stars, girls from the different *revues*, women not openly *declassées* and others frankly so; writers, artists, older men, self-made, prosperous men with doubtful wives or companions whose names were linked to theirs by gossip, younger men from Wall Street on a lark.

TED had rather welcomed the party, hoping that the reaction would lift him out of his mood. He found, on the contrary, gayety difficult, felt dispirited and out of place here too. He separated himself from the crowd. Kitty was dancing to her heart's content. The others had scattered. He wandered upstairs and looked down from the balcony on the rollicking mass and the scores of multicolored lanterns, and passed out onto the deck.

From the pilot-house Mrs. Bolton, under Colonel Larrabee's affectionate direction, was manipulating the searchlight, picking out the couples who were seeking shelter in the woods. Shrieks of laughter, indignant protests! Standing, with a pretense of jealousy, carried away Mrs. Bolton. The Colonel recognized his son and came over, tapping him on the shoulder.

"Great turnout, isn't it?"

"One of your best, Governor."

"Sweetest little woman in the world, that Mrs. Bolton. Need any more money?"

Ted glanced at him, wondering in what condition he might be.

"Lord, no!"

"By the way, when are you going to get married, Ted?"

"I'm not going to get married, Governor."

He decided that the Colonel must be a little hazy, for a long silence followed this announcement.

"I didn't get that."

"I'm not going to marry. It's all off between Jean and me."

The Colonel's voice cleared, became sharply peremptory. His hand fell like a vise on his son's arm.

"What the hell nonsense is this?"

"It's no nonsense, Governor."

The Colonel swore roundly.

"What infernal mischief have you been into?"



She lived with his photographs about her, spent long hours reading over the record of the years.

"It's not that. I don't know as you'd understand."

"When did it happen?"

"Today."

"Why did she chuck you over?"

"She didn't, Governor. I saw what was coming. I was the one who brought it up."

The Colonel's oaths grew in picturesqueness.

"You gave her up? You gave her up? My boy, you're a fool. Do you understand me? A damn' sentimental fool!"

Ted stiffened, an angry retort on his lips. The last person in the world to reproach him—his father!

"You go back on your hands and knees to that girl, and you beg her to take you back! That's the first thing for you to do!"

"I won't be talked to that way, Governor."

"You won't!"

"No, I won't! Not from you, sir."

It was out, amid a burst of anger that swept away all inhibitions. Before the Colonel could answer, there was the patter of slippers and a swish of skirts behind him, a woman's voice calling:

"Tom, darling, you come right down and pay me some attention!"

"Don't bother me!"

The Colonel snapped it out without a turn of his head.

"Why, Tom, dear!"

"Run away—I'm busy."

"I've never been treated so in all my life! Tom Larrabee, you're a beast!"

"All right, but get out."

The tone permitted no hesitation. There was a gasp of amazement, a flood of verbal indignation, final fright and a scurried departure.

"What did you mean—not from me?"

"I'm sorry, Governor; I shouldn't have said it."

"Well, you've said it. What do you mean? She's not throwing you over on my account, is she?"

"I've told you what happened. I don't want to quarrel with you, Governor. I'm sort of shot to pieces. You might try to understand."

"I'm trying to." His tone softened. "But you're as much as telling me that you threw up the sponge. Is that right?"

"I suppose so."

"Why?"

"We've grown apart."

"Doesn't she love you? Don't you love her?"

"That's not the point, Governor." He said it wearily, more and more irritated at this surprising attitude of condemnation where he had counted on understanding. "Things have changed. Jean's interested in other things. She wants some one who is doing things, and I—well, I don't class up."

"She's told you that?"

She came in, closing the door behind them. His hand still had her letter twisted in it.

"About that."
"So that's it? Well, get to work, then."

"I wanted to. You may remember what you thought of it then."

"Come into my office."
Ted laughed.

"Cheaper to pension me off!"

"I'll put you in Congress."

"You will, yes. But that won't be to my credit."

"By the Lord Harry, you're not going to give up such a prize as Jean Waddington! She's a woman, and she loves you. Damn it, don't be a weakling. Go in and win her the way you'd win any other woman!"

"I could have married her long ago," he retorted, "if I hadn't any more self-respect than that."

"Are you drunk?" said the Colonel abruptly.

"Cold sober."

"Then you're the biggest fool alive!"

With which he stamped off, leaving Ted with his own reflections. Rather bewildering! Hadn't expected this of his father. Incongruous from him! At any rate, he had held his tongue. He had not blamed him. Besides, what good would that have done? The old fellow adored him, in his way. From his point of view he must seem incomprehensible—a quixotic idiot. Probably anyone else would think so too. He turned and went down to the lights and the revelry.

"I suppose this is what I'm fitted for, anyway."

Some one waved to him, a smile, an invitation in the eyes. He cut in and began to dance.

Chapter Twenty

WHEN Ted had gone off with a show of bravado to deceive the others, Jean had felt the need of summing up all her courage to hide her emotion. The last guests lingered a short half-hour. The time seemed interminable before she could escape to her rooms.

Was it final? Did she wish it final? For the rupture had seemed to her inevitable. For months she had suffered in her pride, suffered without the comprehension that an older woman might have had.

How, she reflected now, could Ted love her and be so incapable of effort to win her? All that she had feared of the weakness in him, had been spread before her. She had shown him her love without reserve, begged him in a moment of emotional impulse

to marry her—and the answer? A few weeks of effort and a quick backsliding to the habits of an idler. How cheaply he had held what she had offered! The emotion which had dominated her as she stood at the end of their interview, her back to the tree, staring past him, was the futility of all her striving. Back again to where they had started! A stone wall against which to batter her head! Futility—futility! What further proof was necessary? Yet she had told him in the last emotional weakness that she could not accept his renunciation as final. Did she mean it?

Jean herself went over the scene again, pressing her head against the window-pane, staring out over the winding shore, to gray water and gray sky.

Again, it seemed to her, she could hear his voice cry out under her goading:

"Jealous? Of course I'm jealous! I never see you."

That had been sincere, that had been dragged from him in an unwilling outburst.

"Growing apart!"

He had felt it too, recognized it. How far apart? Again the feeling of the stone wall between them. How little they had said to each other! How tragic to part in such misunderstanding after the long years of harmony!





"You might be more generous. It is hard enough."

Had she been ungenerous? Perhaps. But why? Why had she so passionately resented the saying of the very things which were imbedded in her own mind?

"If I could only be sure he loved me!" she cried to herself in her misery. "But how can I believe in his love?"

Surely a man who loved could not have been so master of himself. Something would have betrayed itself in his eyes, his voice. He would have caught her in his arms, illogically, wildly, irresistibly, at the final moment of parting! But he had treated it like a game that had been lost, nothing more than a game! That was what had hurt. That had struck deep into the roots of her pride. That was the doubt that tortured her. . . .

The next day, when all the slumbering irritation of months had been forgotten, only the memory of the lovable qualities in Ted remained. After all, his action had been characteristic. He had done what he had done to spare her the hardship of doing it herself. He would have none of her pity. Great weakness, but the weakness of a strong and lovable personality. He had never failed to ring true when she had appealed to him. The first to acknowledge his faults! How many men who courted her would have refused the opportunity she had given Ted to marry her the day of her father's death? A great deal to respect

in him. Nothing mean, nothing petty, holding always to his self-respect. The pity of it—that the boy she had looked up to, the boy with his fine simplicity and strong ambitions, should be the victim of circumstances, divided home, insidious corrupting influence of his father, fatal interruption of the war, life made too easy! The pity of it, that anything should ever have come between them!

When she remembered the things she loved in him, all resentment went before the deep abiding tenderness in her heart. Life without Ted in it? How blank that would be! His friendship—she must save that, at least.

But if she knew now that she could not marry him, had she a right to call him back? When she reached this point in her reflections, she felt again the sudden rise of the blank wall. Back again to the same dilemma! How could she marry him and not be false to everything she had proclaimed? Her impulse said one thing, her logic another. Marry him and continue to grow apart? Marry him and struggle to redeem him in one blind act of courage? For if she called him back, it could mean only that!

She was in this mood of profound indecision when late that afternoon Miss Higgins, her secretary, came in with the papers and the mail.

"Put them down; I'll look at them later," she said.

The little ugly woman looked at her, undecided.

"What is it? Anything important?"

"Beg your pardon, Miss Waddington. Perhaps you'd better see it now."

She brought forward the evening paper reluctantly, tendered it. On the front page in staring headlines with Ted's picture was displayed: "SOCIETY MAN ON A SPREE."

Two columns followed—a wild ride down Long Island in the early hours of the morning with two women, names not given; charges: racing at sixty miles an hour, operating a car under the influence of liquor, assaulting an officer of the law and resisting arrest—innuendoes as to the ladies involved and the whole family history of the Larrabees rehashed.

JEAN took up the account and read it carefully. A nasty mess, nastier in its implications. Poor Ted! The thing she had always feared had happened! A public scandal!

She rose, dropped the paper in the wastebasket and put her head in her arms. Other women—what other women? Could he have descended so quickly? She rejected the thought angrily. Such a suspicion was unworthy of her. She rejected it, and yet the doubt hurt her.

She sat down to write him, with an impulsive feeling of loyalty. Difficult letter to phrase. How could she make him understand the tenderness in her heart which had surged up, obliterating every other emotion, in that revealing moment when she divined the tragedy to him? Above all, she must not seem to pity him. She tore up one letter and began another, tore that up and remained staring at the blank pages. Somehow he must be made to feel that she stood steadfastly at his side even if the whole world seemed to turn against him. Curious, the longing in her to bring him back—the moment she felt him going to pieces. But then, she alone was the reason. Easy for a woman to forgive what woman has caused! In the end she wrote: "*Dear old Teddy Bear: Come and see me for old times' sake. —Jinny.*"

The next morning two letters: one from Mrs. Larrabee, imploring her to give her an interview. She shook her head, put it aside. She hadn't the strength for a distressing scene just now.

The other was from Kitty. She held it in her hand a long time, debating. She was not sure that she wanted to read it. The crisis in her life had come. Her decision must be her own. In the end, however, the thought that the letter might throw some light on what had happened overcame her reluctance and she read it.

"Jean darling:

"I am just heart-sick over the whole mess. The public story is too disgusting for words. Ted got into it all trying to protect us. He'd been drinking, but he wasn't drunk. We had been at a rowdy party at Colonel Larrabee's and were hitting it up rather fast, having fun with a lot of motor-cops. We shook off two, but when we doubled on our tracks, the first one caught us, and there was hell to pay. He was mad clear through; he'd had a spill, and his language was simply awful. Ted tried to buy him off; but to be nasty he insisted on taking us all in, me and Clarice and Charley Lancaster. That started a row. More insulting remarks about us. You know Ted. He knocked him clean out and took away his revolver and shield. What could he do? He had to protect us, didn't he?"

"We thought we were clear, but the second cop picked up our trail, and Ted made the three of us jump out while he gave himself up. It was just hard luck, Jean. If the first cop hadn't called us a lot of chorus-girls and worse, it would never have been anything more than a fine. Don't be too hard on Ted. He was holding himself in wonderfully after leaving you. He didn't say anything, but I can guess what took place between you two. I'm awfully sorry for you both. It's just rotten luck that this should have happened when he was taking it so splendidly. He'd kill me if he thought I was writing you this. Oh, my dear, are you sure?"

"KITTY."

"P. S. The Colonel has hushed up the whole affair; nothing more will come out in the papers!"

SHE read the letter again avidly, joyfully. Thank heaven, she had trusted her instinct and written him, that he might know that her faith in him had not been shaken! Violent in his actions and reactions, but incapable of vulgarity! She had never believed that for a moment. How like Ted to protect others and shoulder all the blame! No matter what her final decision would be, she

would always love him! The intensity of her reaction convinced her of that.

She was to have gone to Hot Springs for a week. She wrote excusing herself. She would be waiting for him when he needed her. Two days later came his answer: "*Dear Jinny: Thanks, but seeing you now won't help. —Ted.*"

When she had read it, she sat a long while staring at it blankly. There was no misunderstanding its meaning. To him the rupture was final. He could not come back as a friend.

What was she to do? She had created the situation, laid down the terms. Was she ready to renounce what she had demanded of him, follow the cry of her heart and go blindly, bravely into the unknown, with the knowledge before her of the danger? No halfway measures were possible. One thing or the other: an act of courage or the tearing out of her heart the love of her life and facing the future in long and difficult readjustment. She went back to the country—a long solitary week, shut in on herself, self-examination, self-communion. Then she returned to New York.

Here she learned that the thing she feared had happened: Ted had started to go to pieces. She wrote immediately to Mrs. Larrabee, asking to come and see her.

Chapter Twenty-one

MRS. LARRABEE lived in an old-fashioned brownstone front house "of the Lansings" in the Murray Hill district just off Park Avenue. From the moment Jean entered, she felt transported into another tradition—an immaculate gray and blue interior, without bustle or parade, well-ordered and drowsy. The maid who ushered her into the upstairs parlor, slipping over the heavy rugs, had been thirty years in the family. The sofas and the old American Chippendale armchairs had the air of having never been sat upon. The gray china silk curtains permitted just the requisite amount of pleasant, demure light to reveal the family portraits on the wall. The tea-table was precisely set, each accessory ranged about the bubbling Queen Anne teakettle. The best books were on the tables; nothing was overcrowded; and each ornament displayed was of a quiet and austere elegance. A room where one conversed staidly, without hurry, on grave interests.

Mrs. Larrabee rose as she entered, and embraced her affectionately.

"It is good of you to come, my dear."

"I felt I ought to—I wanted you to understand."

She said it diffidently, touched at her welcome.

"You'll have a cup of tea?"

"I'd love it."

Mrs. Larrabee dismissed the maid and busied herself with her kettle.

The long years of renunciation since her divorce had left their marks of suppression. The thin, delicate prettiness of the girl had given place to a gaunt asceticism. The features had sharpened; the smile had grown pale and impersonal; as though by a conscious determination, she had returned into a middle-aged virginity. Everything impulsive had long since dried up in her. The one great emotional experience of her life still dominated her in bitterness and rancor, leaving her without charity or generosity. This dominating passion of wounded motherhood, which alone attached her to her sex, was so complete that she was able to improvise an attitude which was completely foreign to her character.

She laid her hand over Jean's and said: "You poor girl, what you have been through!"

Jean looked up and down quickly.

"I was afraid you would feel bitter toward me."

"Blame you? No. I am sad, terribly sad about it all, Jean dear—but blame you? No. I know the rectitude of your character too well. You could only do what you've done from the highest motives. Much as I feel for Ted,—my poor Ted,—I can feel for you too, dear. For you do care for him, don't you?"

"Oh, yes, Mrs. Larrabee, I do."

"Tell me about it."

Adroitly, before beginning her own attack, she encouraged Jean to tell of the events which had led to the rupture, at times interrupting her with a word of sympathy or an exclamation of womanly understanding. When Jean had detailed all, expounded every reason for her own justification, she drew a long breath and said doubtfully:

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Then a laughing suggestion. Other women in the world. Take a chance. "Kitty, of course."

"What else could I do, Mrs. Larrabee?"

"Poor Ted!"

She said it in a way to convey the pity that he should be deprived of the one woman in the world who could bring out all the lovable, fine qualities in him.

"I have been miserable." Her eyes grew dim. "I have thought of him all the time."

"But you have a right to think of yourself too. You have been very patient, my dear girl. Extraordinarily so."

"I have wondered often since if I could have done anything else," said Jean in a low voice.

"The pity is that so much tragedy comes from our inexperience. How differently we could handle a situation if we only knew what we know ten years later." Mrs. Larrabee, having associated her misfortunes with those of her listener, appeared to reflect a moment.

"Of course," she began as though reluctantly. "I have not the right to influence your decision, for despite what you say, I can see that you are still not quite certain of your action. It is a very big decision—your life and Ted's; and I would shrink from undertaking such responsibility, much as I love you both. But there are some things you may understand better from an older woman, a woman who has seen how life works out, and made her own mistakes."

Jean looked up, surprised.

The other woman smiled at her gently.

"Yes, mistakes, my dear. How fearful those mistakes have been, I realize now. I am to blame, terribly, for all that has happened."

"Oh, Mrs. Larrabee!"

"My dear, if I had known what I know now, I would never have permitted my son's home to be broken up, no matter what happened. But I was married at nineteen—think of it—nineteen! And he was a boy, a young barbarian of twenty-two! An older woman might have understood and guided him. I failed. That surprises you? My dear, there was a great deal of good in my husband, a great deal to build on, if I had known," she continued, almost convinced of what she was saying. "When a man is kind at heart, Jean, a woman can do anything with him if she wants to, and if she knows the real values of life. Men are different from us, my dear girl, different virtues and different vices, stronger passions. They are selfish in their way, but not in the way women are. Forgive my speaking of it, but you will understand. Now, with all his faults, Tom adores his son. He would sacrifice anything for him. You understand?"

"Yes, I understand."

"Men are bigger hearted, more generous than we are, my dear. Men have vices, because they are easily led, but women are vicious. You can appeal to a man's sense of fairness and to his generosity. You can bring him back to you as you win a child.

Kitty burst into tears of rage. "Jean Waddington, I'll never forgive you for that—never!"

I know that now. I didn't then. Pride is our undoing, Jean, such women as you and I. We wrap ourselves up in it, obstinately, sacrifice everything to it, and in the end we find we have sacrificed our own happiness. It's our pride that makes us demand too much and give too little. If we only knew!"

She paused a moment, and looked at Jean with the serene sorrow in her smile that one recognizes in the eyes of holy men and women.

"If we knew! Isn't it because we mean so little in each other's lives that so many marriages fail? Only a little emotion, a little novelty—and then? But the woman who goes out and fights for the existence of a man, who means to him salvation, that woman is repaid a thousand times. The more she gives, the more she is necessary to him, and the more she receives. To feel you are needed every moment of the day, in big things and small, that is happiness. The happiest women I know are those who have stood by their husbands in the hardest times and won out. We often pity such women. The ones to be pitied are those who have never been permitted to give anything. Remember what I have said. Think it over. You are not the sort to live superficially and give lightly of yourself. You have need of feeling profoundly and completely, haven't you, dear?"

"Yes."

With an instinct of modesty as she said this, Jean dropped her gaze.

"What is the situation?" continued Mrs. Larrabee, perceiving her emotion. "Now, be frank with me. I want to see your side as well. Is it a question of another woman?"

"No indeed, Mrs. Larrabee." The young girl, all in a breath, rushed to defend him. "I must be just. Never! I know that absolutely."

"What, never any other woman?"



She purposely exaggerated her amazement.

"No, never!"

"But then—" She appeared to check herself, but her face continued to show surprise. "I beg your pardon; I had thought—no matter. Now answer me. Can you trust him?"

"I can."

"Do you feel that he is kind of heart, unselfish?"

"Oh, Mrs. Larrabee, you know Ted."

"But what, then, are you afraid of?"

The young girl hesitated.

"Tell me, my dear."

Jean drew a courageous breath.

"I am afraid of what happened to you," she said desperately. For after all, she felt how weakly she had defended herself.



"Ah, I knew that was the trouble. You make me feel very miserable, very guilty, my dear."

"Oh, Mrs. Larrabee, I am sorry. I didn't mean to hurt you," cried Jean.

"You are not the child I was," Mrs. Larrabee answered after a long breath. "You see very clearly for your age, and you will dominate him, I feel sure. The whole trouble is his associations. Isn't it true?"

Jean reflected. It was true. All dwindled down to this. She nodded her head.

"But if you married him, you would take him out of all that. Haven't you always found he responded to what you asked him?" asked Mrs. Larrabee.

"Yes."

"If he is easily influenced by friends, wouldn't he be influenced by the woman he has loved all his life?"

"I have thought of that."

"If he is honest and loyal and kind, and you trust him, it is only his weakness you have to deal with then, isn't it?" Without waiting for an answer, trusting her intuition, she passed rapidly on.

"Now, my dear girl, I can't make your decision for you. I won't. But think over what I've said."

"Oh, I will, Mrs. Larrabee."

She raised her face, and her eyes were shining.

"Remember what I said about the opportunity to mean everything to a man. For I think, my dear, that would mean a great, great happiness to you."

"Mrs. Larrabee, believe me, I will think over all you've said." She rose and put her

arms around the older woman impulsively. "It has done me so much good to talk with you this way. I think you are wonderful, to be so big in your point of view."

"After what I have gone through?" said Mrs. Larrabee, sadly, returning her embrace.

"Yes, how can you?"

"It is because, my dear," said Mrs. Larrabee, so elated in her maternal triumph that she became capable of a stroke of genius, "because when I was your age, I saw men only as my lovers; now I see them as my sons."

Tears came to the young girl's eyes. She kissed Mrs. Larrabee hurriedly and went out. Her heart was full of joy, for she had heard the things she craved to hear.

Chapter Twenty-two

THE days that followed brought Jean no peace. She had not realized the depth of her own feeling nor the intensity of her emotional nature. She realized all at once that it was her

own life was in question, it was herself that was being sacrificed. Everything now drew her back to Ted, but the very intensity of her emotion made her hesitate. She needed a little more time to convince herself that what her impulses urged her to was a consequence of a reasoned perception. She wrote a note to Mrs. Larrabee, thanking her from her heart. How she had misjudged her all these years!

Now she had but one thought, to meet Ted again, casually, as though by chance. He had avoided the parties where he knew she would be. She had divined this. Once even she was certain that he had been present and had withdrawn the moment she had appeared. She went down to the Tarneys' for the week-end, hoping that he might be playing polo at the club.

In the afternoon Victor Daggett came down. His arrival seemed providential. He represented to her what she would have to look forward to if she lacked the courage to marry Ted. Ted had been jealous of Daggett. She understood it now. Of all the men who had sought her, Daggett was the most persistent and the most elusive. He would never risk a proposal until he was certain of the answer. He would never risk all on one throw, when patience and ingratiating habit might prevail in the long run. Daggett was always in the background of her life, waiting. Yet lately there had been a change. He had watched her, studied her, redoubled his attentions. Well, it might be illuminating to have the alternative at hand.

THE party had broken up after dinner; two tables of bridge, a few dancing in the boathouse to the accompaniment of a phonograph. She was with Daggett on the beach watching the moonlight rippling on the water. Expectant, she waited, wondering if he had staged this sentimental setting for a definite purpose. Daggett, of course, must believe, as everyone else believed, that her engagement had been definitely broken. Was he going to sound her out?

"Jean Waddington, I want you to listen to me," he began with mock seriousness.

"Why not 'Your Honor'?" she thought, smiling to herself.

"Once long ago when you were in a mood to amuse yourself, you flung out a challenge. Do you remember?"

"Oh, yes—the Western way of courting?"

"Exactly. I think you were not serious. I was."

She refused to enlighten him, waiting developments.

"May I ask you a few questions?"

Always cautious!

"Yes, why not?"

"By the way," he said casually, "this is not an attempt at a proposal—even with the moonlight aiding."

"Shall we call it a discussion of marriage, then?"

He laughed. "You read my thoughts."

"A theoretical discussion?"

"Naturally." He deliberated. "You intend, of course, to marry."

"That's true."

"Afraid to commit himself," she thought. "Now, after the address to the court, the cross-examination."

"I'm going to read your thoughts."

"Splendid."

"You feel the responsibility of your fortune—I know that. Rather frightened you at first. Now, on the contrary, you are keenly interested in what you can do with it. When you marry, it will not be simply to enjoy life superficially, but to find greater interests. When you create your home, it will be something like this of the Tarneys, bringing around you men and women who are doing things, interesting things. You want a life that will stimulate you. You will never be happy just idling."

She moved uneasily. "The Tarneys' home is delightful."

"We agree so far."

"Where don't we?"

"You take the sentimental view toward marriage."

"Sentimental? What can that mean?"

"You look to it through your emotions rather than your intelligence."

"I see."

"Amuses you? Of course. All in the point of view. Your point of view will be different in five years."

"I wonder."

"Nevertheless I believe you understand what I mean more than you care to acknowledge. You see the mistakes your friends are making—have made. You know the answer—divorce. Because, with them, marriage is an emotional experience. I don't

believe in that." He waited, but she gave no answer. "As a matter of fact, the wonder is not that such marriages fail, but that any succeed. Two young persons, without any knowledge of the world, of themselves, or of what they will later demand of life, are thrown together in an impressionable moment. They marry lightly, because it is a thing that everyone is doing, because it seems a more amusing way of playing the game. That's one way. If both happen to be—well, let's say temperamentally inflammable, Nature for her own ends awakes in them a craving for each other that becomes an obsession—and nothing is crueler than Nature. A marriage built on such lines is bound to end in disillusionment. It is really not much more than a union *libre*, and is dead when the passion dies. Why? Because our passions either consume us or consume themselves. If you make passion the basis of marriage, is it any wonder that each is tempted to find its renewal elsewhere, when passion has become a tyrannical habit? Frankly, most of the marriages we see are simply legalized liaisons. That's marriage *à la mode*—in modern society."

He paused to refill his pipe and to reflect on what he had said, wondering if he had conveyed his meaning. His plan of campaign carefully thought out, he felt the moment propitious to appeal to her mentality, trusting her intuition to divine the personal application.

But at this moment Jean, with half-closed eyes, was abandoned to the singing night. Unfortunately for Daggett, everything about her called to her imagination and stirred the very emotions against which he was drawing such a powerful indictment. She was delightfully at ease, the sand cool to the touch of her fingers; a light breeze stirred the hair across her temples, as she lay listening to the voices from treetop and marsh, looking out on the watery night with its one revealing path of light, and all her thoughts were of Ted. She remembered hungrily the bewildering, frightened ecstasy of that moment when her body had been caught in his rough magnetic arms, in the first strong passion which had come out of their childhood's love.

She remembered again that last moment in the garden, when she had swayed to his shoulder, faint and dizzy. She remembered how her lips had been ready to be taken imperiously by his, and this kiss that had been denied her, that she had desired with all her being, haunted her imagination, seemed to be hovering over her, tantalizingly withheld. She heard Daggett stop.

"What nonsense is he talking?" she thought. Had he ever been stirred in his life? Men who are self-sufficient seldom awaken love in a woman, who to love must feel that they are needed. Ted, on the contrary, needed her.

That was different. Weakness, but the weakness of a man of strong feelings. The memory of his look in defeat caught her heart with a sudden ache. How still he had stood, staring rigidly past her at that last parting!

Daggett's voice continued:

"Life is mostly lived after thirty. It's good to remember that. And also remember that the attraction between the sexes is the most natural thing in the world, and comes easily after you grow to respect and depend upon each other. To my mind, marriage ought not to be an end but a departure for something to be achieved—children of course, but beyond that, where there isn't simply the struggle to live, something definite ahead to work for together."

SHE was so quiet that, deceived, he ventured a little farther than he had intended. "These things you don't realize now. You are looking ahead at life. Perhaps that's why you may be a little puzzled at what I am saying. In a measure, I'm looking back—I see the workings out of things. You don't mind my being personal? In your case, if you cannot treat the fortune which has been flung in your lap as an opportunity, you will be bored to death. Others no, but you yes. Because you have a mind, and your mind craves interests. If you marry a man with a career, you will be a tremendous part of that career. In a sense, you will make it your own. A woman of charm, distinction and brains can create an atmosphere around her that in any society means power. You can influence men of science, creative artists, men with political careers. What is it you want in life? Determine that first, and then ask yourself what man will mean that."

All this was in exceeding good sense, and already to her purpose, which he knew. But at this moment, with her heart given to another man, she was thinking with a little resentment:

"Does he expect me to propose, I wonder? Is it his pride? Is he mortally afraid of a refusal? And does he think that this will satisfy me?"

(Continued on page 137)

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Here are more extracts from the Dear Diary of the Escanaba girl who went to Hollywood to become the world's super-vamp. One has but to drive slowly along Hollywood and Sunset boulevards, glancing at the sidewalks, to realize that Miss Dale's girl is a real type.

By
Virginia
Dale

"Came the Dawn

Illustrated by Edward Ryan



He said, "Oh, are you in the movies?" and was very thrilled.

SEPT. 1: Have just had a letter from Mamma. She says there is a new girl in Escanaba which all the boys are "rushing" including Avery. I had to laugh. It certainly does not make any difference to me who he rushes and I am merely sorry for him. If he can see anything in such small town girls he is welcome to them is all I can say. But perhaps I will write to him and remind him he promised to wait for me while I am out here in Hollywood to become the screen's most foremost vamp. Not that I am interested in what he would say but just because I consider it all beneath me. And if he is "rushing" this small town girl I certainly do not consider him the kind of a boy which should "wait" for me. Sometimes I have the feeling that all men are deceivers anyway. A girl is much better like me who does not think of men but only of her "career."

The studios are quite busy but it is the same old story. If a girl is not willing to "pay the price" there is no work for her. I have been in Hollywood for many months now and I have not "paid the price," as it is not my philosophy of life to do so. How will it all end?

There is a new roomer in the house who is quite good looking, reminding me of Bill Hart without his horse. But he is not in the "profession" and so could not interest me no matter how hard he would try. I merely nodded to him on the stairs the other morning as he looked very homesick. I think there is nothing like the friendliness of a good woman to a man when he looks homesick. It might save him from who knows what he might do in his lonesomeness. So I merely nodded and some day I suppose he will tell it around when I am a star how I nodded, never knowing there was nothing personal in it. I am not like this new small town girl which tries to flirt with men. It does not seem possible I was born in Escanaba myself and lived there until I came on for my "career."

SEPT. 2: Went to the Super-Zenith studios this morning. They are the company who everyone knows has the "wonder dog Fleetfoot," and they are going to do a new picture with him. Fleetfoot is by many considered the finest actor in the movie "game" and probably the only one who really gets by on "personality" and does not have to depend on "sex appeal." The story they are going to do next is "Black Beauty," which was originally a horse but they are going to change it into a dog which is man's best friend. It is going to be called "The Only Passion."

The casting director told me to come back in a couple of days and perhaps there would be something for me in a cabaret scene. Well I do not know if he meant he would give me work or not as he gave me a terrible "leer" as he made the remark. A girl cannot be too careful out here in Hollywood and he may of merely said for me to come back to lure me on. To many casting directors have told me to come back and when I did, did

not remember me when I reminded them I had come for work. I suppose they decided in the meantime I was not the kind of girl which would "pay the price" and so lost interest in me.

Sometimes I wonder whether a "career" is worth while and the love of a man with steady pay who wants to marry you would not be better. But then I remember men are deceivers when I remember Avery, who has not written for several weeks. This new roomer does not look like he would deceive a girl, as honesty is written all over his face. And anyway the landlady said he was connected with Willie Monday, who is coming to preach here, and being connected with a religious man would influence a man like this roomer not to be deceiving. That is one of my theories.

But I would not care to get acquainted with this roomer because I suppose he thinks anyone in the "profession" like me cares for nothing but wild "parties" and he would take it upon himself to make me change my life. I am not the kind of girl which can be dictated to. So I have given him no encouragement. I merely and simply nod to him in a friendly manner merely because he keeps on looking homesick. I must stop writing now and press out my pink kimono. I am always meeting this roomer as I go down the hall to wash. I certainly hope he is not the kind of a man which would deliberately wait to see a girl in her kimono. . . .

Sept. 5: Well, I worked on a "set" with the wonder dog Fleetfoot today as I decided to go back to the Super-Zenith in spite of the "leer" that casting director gave me. He was very gentlemanly when I went back, having seen I would not be in-

terested in any man and as Mamma always said a man always knows a good girl but of course Mamma does not know that all the attention is paid to the bad ones. Just to try out this casting director, I said, "Well, I have come back like you told me," but he acted like he did not remember. I suppose anyone which works around the motion picture companies gets so they act whether they are paid for it or not, which I suppose is what is called a prenatal influence. That is one thing which I admire this new roomer for. He is so sincere. A girl like me in the "profession" don't meet many men who are "sincere."

Well I must put on my kimono and go down to the bathroom to cream my face, as the mirror is so much better there and I am a firm believer in the fact that every girl should take care of her skin. Mamma says this new girl in Escanaba has red hair and so I suppose she has freckles, which only goes to show what a funny boy Avery is. I am glad I found him out in time. There was always something about A. which was not sincere. I have decided not to have this Diary published when I am a star, because some one told me today that the stars really have their press-agents write their diaries. Not because the press-agents know more about their lives, but because they do not.

Later: I am all of a tremble! I ran into this new roomer in the hall! I suppose that is what is called "the long arm of coincidents," as the saying is. Or was it fate? He was just coming out of his room as I was, and he asked me in his serious way whether I would be long in the bathroom as he wanted to shave. I suppose he was waiting for me to come so he could ask that as a pretext, but I saw through him at once but he was so gentlemanly and serious I could not be mad. I told him I would not be long as my training in the profession had trained me to put make-up on and off very quick, but he must not think I used it on the street as I was not that kind of a girl. And he said, "Oh, are you in the movies?" and was very thrilled. I told him I was a "find," as I had probably been in more cabaret scenes than anyone in Hollywood, which showed what they thought of me out here.

Well, to make a long story short, we talked and talked, and he is just as sincere as I thought. I forgot I was standing there in my pink kimono for a long time and then

when I remembered I thought that as long as it had been such a long time before I remembered and he had been simply so sincere all the time I would overlook it all. I suppose next he will be asking for a "date" and will want to reform me, as of course in his business he thinks all girls in my "profession" need reforming of course. But I am not the kind of girl which believes in all these wild parties, but as the saying is "do like the Romans do." So if I am ever asked to a wild party I will go in spite of anything this roomer says.

Sept. 6: Worked on the "set" today in "The Noblest Love," which is what they have decided to call "Black Beauty" with the wonder dog Fleetfoot. So far Fleetfoot has not acted, as they used doubles to jump through glass windows and when he was a puppy. To a serious girl like I, one cannot help feel how very deceitful the movies are. In that way they remind me of men. Had a letter from Mamma today and she said that new girl in Escanaba had gone to the Elks picnic with A. and I certainly had a good laugh over it all. I suppose Avery is taking her around hopping I will hear of it, and so I had a good laugh. Avery does not seem to realize I am out here on a career and simply cannot be bothered with small town boys such as him.

I happened to drop my soap in front of the new roomer's door tonight and as I was trying to find it in the dark, if he didn't open his door! We had another long serious talk. It means a great deal to a girl like I to talk to a serious man which has ideals. He is working quite hard to get up enthusiasm



I might have been walking
yet, only some people came
along from Iowa.



Flora Pretty said nothing would make her act without music. And Fleetfoot kept on howling.

for Willie Monday so that Mr. Monday can get his message to the masses. He said he could see I had intuition and could understand what a responsibility that was. He said being press agent to a film star was mere child's play to being one for a preacher, as you cannot use the same methods as the public would not stand for it. But he says he can put over anyone, he being the first man which first put snakes in the hotel room of the singer which was going to sing Leah Patra. Only he said the snakes should of really been asps only the public never knew the difference but he will always regret they were not asps because if they had of been instead of plain garden snakes, they would not of squirmed down to the consurvetory, and the lady which was to sing would not of been put out of the hotel.

And once he was press-agent for a big star on the stage. I think it might have been Marie Dressler, which I have seen in Escanaba but he did not say. But anyway he arranged for her to be put out of all hotels because of her dog. All the newspapers printed the story about the dog until it was better known than this star was, and she could not see the bigness of his idea.

So then he went to be press-agent for this Willie Monday, but he has never had him put out of a hotel. Oh, Dear Diary, it is so thrilling to hear him talk. After coming in contact with a man like he, which does Big Things, it is only to be expected I could never give Avery another thought. I will always be merely sorry for him. That is all. If A. marries this new small town girl, he will just have to make the best of it. As Mr. Scoop Martin says (that is the roomer's name), a man without vision is a man without a soul, and I could never be interested in a soulless man.

Sept. 8: Well, I have been working at the Super-Zenith for two days now in the wonder dog's Fleetfoot's picture, which is now called "Beauty's Price," as the director said as long as they had to pay so much for the screen rights, they ought to keep at least one word of the original title of "Black Beauty."

We have been having quite a time. Flora Pretty is the leading lady, and she is one of those kind of girls which are so afraid any other pretty girl on the "set" will get some attention she does everything in her power to make all the men talk to her. I am glad I am not that kind. (Continued on page 122)

The Key in Michael

By Elsa Barker

DEXTER DRAKE, Elsa Barker's ingenious detective, never encountered a deeper problem than the one presented him in this story, a problem that keyed him up to his greatest effort. That he solved it was of course inevitable, but could you have done so—even if you happened to be familiar with the game that proves to be involved in it?

Illustrated by
T. D. Skidmore

IF I had not happened to say to Dexter Drake one evening that I had often been surprised by the strain of childlike gayety in the tragic Russian temperament, I suppose I should never have heard the remarkable story of Prince Boris Vorontsov and the Key in Michael.

My friend the detective had just finished a strenuous case and was idling after dinner, his slim athletic length stretched out on our sitting-room couch.

"Yes, Howard!" Drake looked round at me with his keen black eyes. "And it was that childlike strain in the tragic Russian soul which brought me one of the oddest problems I was ever called upon to solve. Indeed, I have rarely been more puzzled than I was for those few days in Paris, Nice and Monte Carlo. I'll tell you about it."

Drake swung his feet off the couch and sat up. His lethargy was gone now; his bronzed aquiline face had come suddenly alive.

"Just a moment, Howard." He rose to his feet. "I'll need that curious paper I found in the Paris studio, and the diagram I worked out from it; they're in my filing-cabinet."

He turned and strode down the corridor to his study.

It was seldom that I caught the great criminal-expert in a story-telling mood, seldom that he had time for story-telling. But with his immense experience in so many parts of the earth, he could have gone right on and on, I suppose, like *Scheherazade*, for a thousand and one nights.

In three minutes he was back in the sitting-room, with a large



yellow envelope in his hand. Suppose I leave out the quotation and double quotation marks, and just let you imagine Dexter Drake sitting there on the couch and telling the story to me. . . .

It was late March (Drake said) in the second year after the Bolshevik horror began. Coming up from Constantinople, where I had been sent by the

New York police to find a man who was dead when I got there, I decided to give myself a holiday week in Paris, see my old friends of the Paris police and make a few social calls.

For two years I had had no letter from my friend the eighty-year-old Russian Princess Vorontsov, though I had learned in Constantinople that she had escaped from her devastated country and was back in her Paris house, in the Boulevard Suchet. Escaped from Russia—at eighty! But that did not really surprise me. She had always been an amazing person.

Her only son, Prince Michael Vorontsov, had also, I learned, got through the net of the Red Terror and had made his way into France; but he had died three months ago, in Nice. That was all I could learn about them in Constantinople. Where was Prince Boris, the old lady's grandson? They could not tell me. Was he alive? They did not know.

Now, I had known Boris Vorontsov since he was fifteen years old, though I had not seen him since the spring of 1914, when he was twenty. A delightful, impulsive, romantic young Russian he had been. What was he now—if he had survived?

But the first friend I saw in Paris assured me that Boris was with his grandmother. He had been in the old Russian army of

My heart must have been going ninety-five to the minute as I unfolded the paper.

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the Czar, and he also had made his way out—but alone, and after great hardships. Was he changed? No, not on the surface—the same gay, irresponsible, childlike young soul we had always known.

"But has the old Princess any money now?" I asked.

"Nobody seems to know," my friend said. "She keeps only three servants instead of seven, and she no longer wears jewels—not a stone. She won't even talk about her escape—it's all very mysterious."

The servants, I thought, might be Russians, glad even of a roof.

"The Princess," my friend ran on, "says that the world has come to an end, but that she has to sit tidily on the ruins for eighteen years longer, and cultivate her neglected talents."

It sounded just like her.

Many times the old Princess had assured me that she was going to live to be ninety-eight. When she was a girl, and lady-in-waiting to some Russian empress whose name I have forgotten, a gypsy woman had told her that her span of life was a hundred years minus two years. Nothing could shake her belief in it. It was one of her many delightful oddities. "I shall see you a middle-aged man with gray hair, Dexter Drake," she said to me once, years ago, when I was twenty-one and she seventy.

While the octogenarian Princess was "cultivating her neglected talents," I wondered when secret emissaries of the Reds would begin to peddle the Vorontsov jewels round the capitals of western Europe. Rumor had valued them long ago at the equivalent of a million dollars.

And Prince Michael was dead! But him I had never known well, for he was generally in Russia. I remembered a portrait of him in brilliant uniform which hung over the chimney-piece in the great semidetached room the Vorontsovs called the studio—for the Princess dabbled with paints. She also wrote verses. The house in the Boulevard Suchet had once belonged to a sculptor who had sacrificed part of his garden to build the big studio. The garage was behind it, with its back against the house. If you will remember these details, they will help you to visualize my struggles with the Vorontsov puzzle. But the excitement did not begin until after Boris went down to Nice.

In the late afternoon of that first day of my holiday week in Paris, I was ringing the bell in the gate of their high-walled garden. I saw the house-door slowly open, and a middle-aged manservant—a Frenchman—came to unlock the gate.

No, the Princess was not at home; she had been in Nice for the last month. But Prince Boris was there; he was alone in the studio.

"Then don't announce me," I said, and I turned down the little gravel walk to the right, and knocked on the well-remembered oaken door.

The door opened—there was a breathless moment. . . .

"Why, Dexter! Dexter Drake! I don't believe it—I don't believe it—I don't—"

Grasping my hand, Boris drew me into the studio.

He was wearing a brown velvet housecoat, and there was a gold-tipped cigarette between his slim fingers.

My friend had been right. The terrible years had but slightly changed Boris Vorontsov. The slight graceful figure was half an inch taller, maybe, and he had acquired a little yellow mustache. But the old spontaneous gaiety was there still, the laughter on the lips and in the tawny eyes.

Ensconcing me in the largest easy-chair, he gave me tea from the samovar, gave me sweets, cigarettes.

Where was I staying? But I must have my things sent right over. Of course

I must stay with them. Grandmamma would be so delighted. He was just starting for Nice, that night, to fetch her home. I must remain here while he was gone—a couple of days only. François would make me comfortable—he and the Russian cook. Of course I remembered his own old room at the head of the stairs? That was for me. He now occupied the Louis XIV room—the one which had been his father's. (Prince Michael, you know.) I had no engagement that eve-



In parting she kissed me on both cheeks and told me to be wise—"Sois-tu sage!"

ning? No? Oh, that was perfect! Then we could dine here together, early; I could see him off at the Gare de Lyon, then fetch my things from the hotel.

The lapse of years seemed unreal. This had always been their family living-room; the French drawing-room in the main building was used only on formal occasions.

A few minor changes I noticed. A fine tapestry portrait of Louis XIV, with the sun-disk over his head, which used to hang in Prince Michael's bedroom upstairs, was now in the studio—hung flat on the door of a large closet at the back of the room. And in the deep alcove, which with the closet divided that end of the studio, a new and magnificent lion-skin covered the couch, in place of the old Kis Kilim.

"Isn't he a fine beast?" Boris smiled, when I noticed the lion. "Grandmamma found him six weeks ago in a shop in the Rue Châteaudun."

I did not say, but I thought that he must have been rather expensive.

IT is better not to talk to Russians now about Russia—unless they mention it first. After a time Boris mentioned it, told me how he got out. It was a hair-raising tale, and it added a man's respect to my old affection for him. A man's and an adventurer's respect. I have been in some dangerous corners myself.

"Grandmamma says I must work now," he told me, "develop my brains, earn money. I am going to study medicine. She says life has now done the worst it can do. So we must look forward—be gay of heart."

Yes. Sitting "tidily" on the ruins.

Boris was silent for a moment. Then suddenly he looked round at me with his frank boyish eyes.

"I really don't know what we're living on," he declared. "Oh, I know what you're thinking, Dexter! But she got out of Russia with *nothing*—disguised in a peasant's rags. I believe there is something else. She helps the others—those who also have lost everything. Oh, she is deep—deep! Her playfulness doesn't deceive me. She has always complained of my indiscretion, but before she went down to Nice,—she joined an old friend at three hours' notice,—she said that on her return she had something for me to do—a difficult task. Though she smiled—you know her odd little twisted smile. I wonder—"

When it was time for Boris to go to the station, the French manservant François got us the taxicab. The big motorcar of other days was gone now. The garage behind the studio was empty.

As I left my friend in a *wagon-lit* of the Riviera express, he said, with a little flush of apology:

"If you come home late, Dexter, after François has gone to bed, you'll be sure that the gate is locked, wont you? Grandmamma never used to be nervous, but she charged me specially about the gate."

I assured him that I would even verify François' care of it. But it was not like the Princess to be fidgety.

After getting my bags from the hotel, I returned to the house. Until a late hour I sat smoking and reading in the studio, alone with the portrait of the dead Prince Michael. The fate of that whole group—stark tragedy. And the way they face life now, those who survive, is very fine.

THE next day I spent most of my time with a group of old friends in the Latin Quarter. My favorite section of Paris has always been the romantic Left Bank.

It was midnight when I returned to the Vorontsov house. I found the studio lighted, and on the table a telegram for me. It was from Boris, at Nice:

Grandmamma died at seven this evening, of apoplexy. She will be buried here, beside my father. I am writing you. There is something very strange.

I was profoundly shocked—shocked and grieved to the heart. Dead—that amazing old lady! "*Something very strange.*" What-ever did the boy mean?

If I had not known that there were many Russians in Nice, I would have taken the first train for the south. But I decided to telegraph first, then wait for his promised letter.

The next day the Paris newspapers reported the death of the Princess at Nice, reported the presence of her grandson in Nice, gave an account of the Vorontsov family's long and romantic history.

When Boris' letter came, I knew for certain that I had a mys-

tery to unravel—though what it was all about, what the Princess *wanted me to do for her*, I had not the remotest conjecture.

Here is the poor boy's perplexing letter:

My dear Dexter:

You *know* how I feel—I cannot write about that.

Grandmamma was so happy when I told her you were in the house. "Perhaps he will help you," she cried; "it's a task not unworthy of him." But she would not explain—not another word.

She was stricken at tea-time. Only two hours she lived—unconscious after the first few moments. There was something she tried to say to me—she could not control her speech very well, but this much was clear:

"Tell Dexter—Dexter Drake—the *key*—in *Michael*—Left Bank—27 B."

Then she sank into coma.

What does it mean, Dexter? Was she trying to say 27 bis—the number of some Paris house on the Left Bank? But she spoke in English—you know how she always obliged me to keep up my English—and 27 B is what it would be in that language, isn't it? But what *street* on the Left Bank? What *street*? And what does she want you to do there?

She had a little bad spell, early in February. Our doctor in Paris told me—oh, *she* never mentioned it!—that a bullet grazed her side when she was hiding in the Russian forest.

How like her it was to think of you, Dexter, when she had to leave something half-told! In the old happy days when you worked with the Paris police, she was always so thrilled by your cases. I remember the Rigaud case, and your showing her how you worked out the conspirators' secret writing. How delighted she was! She loved puzzles.

I don't just know where I stand. Even the house is not ours; it has been held on a twenty-years' lease. With all her playfulness, it was not easy to cross-question my grandmother.

Will you come down to Nice? The funeral will be Friday morning.

Your bewildered,
BORIS.

"The key—in Michael!" In Michael. I glanced up at that portrait over the chimneypiece. Yes, what else could she mean? I would take the picture down, after the servants had gone to bed. A key—to what? Yes, why "Left Bank" and "27 B," with no street-name? But perhaps the mind of the dying woman was already wandering. Or there might really be some mystery about her way of living.

The future looked dark for my young friend. Without years of professional training, what career would be open to him in France? In America? We had not jobs enough, then, for our own ex-soldiers.

You know I had just come up from Constantinople, where penniless Russian nobles were starving in droves—literally, I mean.

It was after midnight when I locked the door between the studio and the main building, drew the heavy curtains close over the windows, and set to work. From a chair I climbed onto the broad mantelpiece, got the portrait of Prince Michael off its hook, and then to the floor, where I laid it face down on a rug. Inch by inch I went around the picture at the back, between the canvas and the stretcher. I was feeling for a thin key—feeling with the tip of my pocket nail-file and listening for the click of metal against metal.

I had gone halfway round when the file met an obstruction—something soft, though, not hard.

Carefully, with the file and my thumbnail, I got it out—a tightly folded piece of thin gray paper. Was *that* what she had meant?

It had been at the bottom, near the right-hand corner. She could have got it in there without taking the picture down!

My heart must have been going ninety-five to the minute, as I unfolded that sheet of gray paper. Here is what I read:

LEFT BANK, 27 B.

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35-9-11-28-23-28-23-12

In 1739.

There is something about a cipher which sets the imagination spinning—anybody's imagination.

Though I went back to the picture on the rug and continued my search, I found nothing more. The cipher was the "key."

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The Vorontsov jewels—torn from their settings and sewn in that garment of a peasant seamstress!

So I rehung the portrait of Prince Michael.

Now, I have made it my business to know a good deal about ciphers, and there were peculiarities about this one which told me at a glance that it would be difficult to read.

But my first question was this: Had the dying Princess mentioned my name just because I had always been associated in her mind with mysteries and enigmas of all sorts? This message in my hand might be written in a family code, which her grandson knew how to read. It seemed more delicate, more discreet, to show it to him before trying to read it myself. Many old families have hereditary secrets, which even the youngest of them

would prefer not to share with any outsider. I might stumble on almost any romance—yes, any state secret—by fumbling with this “key” in Prince Michael Vorontsov.

There floated before my mind’s eye a vivid picture of the Princess, at the moment of our last parting several years before, at the garden-door of this very room: A vigorous little old lady, not more than five feet two inches tall, in a richly embroidered black-velvet robe with creamy lace round the neck. Very black eyes—eyes incredibly young—smiling out of that splendid old face with its network of tiny wrinkles.

In parting she had kissed me on both (Continued on page 108)



Photograph
by
Steichen

If Walls Could Talk

By Mrs. Philip Lydig

THIS tragic futility of fashionable life was first brought home to me by a distinguished French author who came to Newport, many years ago, during Tennis Week, with letters to me from friends in Paris. He was a comic figure in Newport's eyes. He dressed always in white,—a white suit, white shoes, white socks, even a white cravat,—and he wore an immense Panama hat with an elastic under his chin to keep it on. He had a heavy black beard, and the elastic caught it up and held it protruding ridiculously. Everybody laughed at him. He was very small, alert in his mind and quick in his movements, bright-eyed with curiosity and as unselfconscious as some sort of precociously bearded small boy. Their laughter interested him. If they could have heard his wise and penetrating comments on them, they would not have thought him funny.

I took him driving, one afternoon, to show him the sights.

Whenever we passed a conspicuously luxurious home, he asked: "What is going on inside there? Are they happy? What do they make of life?" And in trying to give him a truthful answer, I found myself invariably relating the most shocking histories of grief and scandal. He became as excited as a street gamin in the chamber of horrors of a *musée* of wax-works. "What misery!" he would cry. "What drama! What a plot for Dostoevsky! Do they write these tales, your American authors? How I wish I knew this American life! We have nothing so colorful in France."

That was a point of view that was new to me. The tragedies of the fashionable rich had seemed tedious and commonplace, dragged out over years of dullness and happening so imperceptibly that they went unregarded. Now, gathered together in this way, briefly, I saw them as he saw them—as dramatic as the two



Photograph © by Brown Brothers, N. Y.

A Fifth Avenue Easter parade of the 'Nineties—past the tragic mansions whose strange secrets Mrs. Lydig here reveals.

hours of concentrated incidents that make a stage play. They came home to me, as I say, for the first time. I was almost as surprised as he. The display and luxury of these lives, the appearance of success and the envy of the world, had blinded me to the real miseries of their existences. I began to look around me with astonishment. I began to ask myself: "Where is there a happy home among these people? Is it possible that there is none?"

It was difficult to find one, then. They are quite as scarce today. Going, just now, in my mind's eye, up and down the avenues and along the cross-streets in the fashionable quarter of New York, I found myself repeating the experience I had in Newport with the horrified Frenchman. "What misery! What drama! What plots for Dostoevsky!"

Here, for instance, is one of the most beautiful houses in New York. I cannot describe it, because I cannot, in honor, tell its story in a way that would be recognized. But it is as spacious and as noble as a Florentine palace, and it is supported by a fortune so large that the magnificence of the Medici would be shabby beside it. It is the home of a woman who used to be a distinguished hostess in the fashionable life of her day. And it is the scene of one of the most terrible stories.

Ida Dyckman, let me call her, was the only daughter and the sole heir of a great fortune that had come to her parents, in trust for her, safely invested and administered by a board of management, so that she had nothing to do but to enjoy it, untroubled. She was a big, ugly girl, with huge hands and feet, as proud and stupid as an Austrian princess. She neither read books nor played games nor rode. Her dancing was monumental and her conversation was equally uninspired, so that physically and mentally she seemed altogether self-complacent and inert. It gave her an impressive quality, an actual oppressiveness, that was quite aristocratic.

I suppose her parents arranged her marriage—an alliance rather than a marriage—to a Frenchman who had inherited one of the oldest titles in the Faubourg St. Germain, let us say. He

received a marriage *dot*, like a woman, with which to rehabilitate his estates and support his parents and his brother Henri, and his widowed sister and his sister's children. Ida and he were married abroad, with great pomp, and when they returned to America, he brought with him this brother Henri.

The husband was a little fat man, dark and lazily cynical. Henri looked like an Englishman. He was big and blond and muscular, full of energy, very charming and extraordinarily cultivated. He was musical; he had studied architecture; he was an amateur astronomer; he had a circle of literary and artistic and scientific friends, interesting and engaging people, and he brought them all to Ida's home to form a salon that was unusual in New York.

He also built Ida her new house—or, at least, he directed the building of it, consulted with the architect, watched the contractors, supervised the decorators, chose the furnishings, and ransacked Europe for the paintings, the wood panelings and the *objets d'art*. It was a triumph of taste and intelligence. Having provided her with this handsome background for her life, he enriched it with the charming circle of his friends—the great musicians of the world to play for her, the finest voices of the opera to sing, poets and scientists and foreign celebrities to make her dinner-table notable, and witty men and pretty women to appreciate and applaud them.

When I first began to know her, she was at the height of her social success. She had been married for several years, and she had two children. One could hardly help envying her. Her life seemed rich in interest and happiness.

It is true that when one went there to dine, Henri appeared to be much more the head of the house than her husband, but that was natural. Henri had all the social graces, and his brother none. The guests were primarily Henri's friends, and they paid him more attention. He sat at the head of the table; the servants, who were all French, looked to him for orders; Ida herself deferred to him and consulted him and gave him the place of honor as host, while her husband sat among the guests,

enjoying his irresponsibility, proud of his brother and affectionately satisfied to let him hold the center of the stage.

I've forgotten how I first heard the report that Henri and she were involved in a *liaison*—that her husband, having married her for money, had neglected and betrayed her, and that she had fallen in love with his brother. I did not believe it. I thought it one of those scandalous falsehoods that poison fashionable life, one of those lies of resentment that are invented by the ill-will of some disregarded social climber and given currency by the envy of the rest. And then I chanced to make a trip across the ocean with them, on a visit to France, and the husband admitted the situation to me in a burst of cynicism.

It is not a breach of confidence to tell it. He talked of it freely, afterward, to everybody. "She means nothing to me," he said. "What is she? American trash! She's of no importance. As long as Henri's happy, that's all that matters. I've told her so. I make no fuss. I would not give Henri a moment's worry. He enjoys himself. He needs the money. She is nobody—nothing. Who should care?"

With that, my intimacy with them ended. I could not bear to see them, Henri at the head of the table, Ida watching him and listening to him devotedly, the husband cynically indifferent and smiling among their guests. It seemed too horrible. Who could listen to music, or enjoy singing, or sit interested before pictures of the canals on Mars explained by an astronomer no matter how famous, while this tragedy ran its sordid course in the background of the evening? For it was a tragedy. Ida was not happy. Her children were growing up. One of them was a little girl. What would that daughter think of her mother when she realized what was going on? What would she think of her father?

He would not give Ida a divorce. He had married her for her money, and he would not be separated from it. He would not name his brother as a co-respondent. He was glad to have Henri enjoy that part of the fortune which was beyond his own reach. He endured the situation, let Henri support their mother and their father and their widowed sister and their sister's children and their family estates in France, occupied himself with various *liaisons* of his own, and revenged himself on his domestic misery by talking of it as he pleased.

A fashionable marriage! What a plot for Dostoevsky, as the Frenchman said.

It came to a sudden end with the death of Henri. He fell ill with pneumonia and died in three days. Ida went to the funeral, like a widow, in mourning, indifferent to appearances, crazed with grief. Her husband was not there. But as soon as the funeral was over, he confronted her weeping in her bedroom. "Now," he said, "it is finished. You either leave this house tonight, or I do."

He left her. He divorced her. As if to show his contempt for all the American women to whom he had been making love, he married a little French hatmaker who worked in a shop around the corner. He took her to Paris, and set her up in business on the *dot* he had obtained from Ida. Ida, a broken recluse, remained shut up in her magnificent home, seen only by her servants, living in the rooms that had been Henri's apartment.

The house is still beautiful. It has one of the most distinguished façades in American architecture, but I cannot bear to pass it. It looks like a bleached skull to me, and the windows of Henri's rooms stare like empty eye-sockets.

A few hundred yards down the street is another house, smaller, much less pretentious, a modest and retiring little home in the most expensive good taste. When I first knew it, I thought it a delightful sort of "love-nest" for a young married couple who were happy and fortunate in everything. They had come to

New York, from the West, to make their way, and they were succeeding. He was an ambitious young lawyer, rather grave and heavy and not brilliant, but obviously solid and reliable. He had just been given charge of the legal affairs of two of the largest traction corporations in New York, and I thought him a fine example of how character wins its way over superficial cleverness. He was accepted everywhere as a coming man.

His wife was a charming contrast to him. She was sweet and pretty and talkative in a quiet way, poised and smiling and evidently watching to use her social cleverness to aid her husband. She had learned to dress with an individual distinction and to decorate and furnish her home in a good taste that made it look fashionable without preventing it from being original. I thought her extremely clever. She was a great favorite with the men, because of a certain Western camaraderie that was not flirtatious and did not make the women jealous.

She was especially a favorite with a very powerful and dangerous man—call him John W. Yelland—from the financial district. I do not know his early history, except that he had inherited some money from his father, who had owned one of the first gas companies in New York and had been ruined in the gas war that led up to the consolidation of the rival companies.

Jack Yelland went through that war with his father, and he admitted that he had started out, after his father's death, to get his revenge on the world that had killed his father. And he got his revenge in ample measure. To do it, he used politics as well as Wall Street, working single-handed, without a friend, as independent as an outlaw and as sincerely dreaded.

He had the figure of a mountaineer, long-legged and broad-shouldered, and the outdoor air of a hunter. He wore his hair unbrushed, in a bang on his forehead, in a rough touse that gave his head a rugged look, designedly, I thought. His eyes seemed to be always stalking something, humorously but stealthily, puckered and smiling and secretly keen. His mouth was cruel. When I first saw him, I thought: "What is that buccaneer doing in a dinner coat?" And then he spoke, with a Harvard accent and a broad "a," enunciating as precisely as if he were a professor of English addressing his class, in a lazily superior and amused voice. The color and the individuality went out of everyone else at the table at once.

I found that he knew his music and his theater and his literature and his art—his theater best of all, for he enjoyed associating with actors. He was himself, I think, as conscious as an actor of his picturesqueness, and designedly looking his part. I distrusted him when I heard him say that he hated horses. He hunted only on foot, with his dogs. He had apparently shot everything that was difficult and dangerous to hunt.

Twice a year, when he was bored with politics and finance, he went off to the nearest wilderness and murdered everything in sight. It sounded Rooseveltian, but his contempt for Roosevelt was appalling.

He had met the young lawyer and his wife out West, on one of his hunting-trips, and taken a great fancy to them both. It was he who persuaded them to come to New York, on the plea that he needed an honest lawyer to help him in his affairs, and within a year he placed the legal business of several wealthy corporations in his friend's hands and started him fairly on the way to make a fortune. It was he, too, who obtained for them the money to build their pretty house and to furnish it so charmingly. He was a bachelor. They entertained his friends for him, and made him as welcome in their home as if it were his own.

That all seemed very sweet and idyllic, but I felt a most unworthy suspicion of him even the first time that I saw them all together at dinner. Jack Yelland did not look like a safe char-

All over America people are imitating the conduct and ideals of the fashionable rich—the so-called "smart set"—of the East. I believe that those ideals are false ideals, tragic ideals, which it is disastrous for America to imitate. The conviction is my justification for preparing and publishing this series of articles on the futility of fashionable life.

Rita Lydig-

acter to be received on terms of intimacy in any conventional home. Beside him the husband, growing plump and bald, had the smooth inertness of a typical office man. He seemed a fat, domestic animal, and Yelland, in comparison, something untamed and predatory. The wife gave me the impression of being nervously aware of Yelland even when she was not looking at him; and I thought that Yelland, when he looked at *her*, passed his eyes over her with a satisfaction that was somehow possessive.

Almost at once it began to be whispered around that Yelland's interest in the wife was more than friendly. She had apparently encouraged him, at first, out of a desire to help her husband, but her loyalty had not endured. She was taking jewels and money from Yelland. Everyone seemed to suspect a guilty relation between them, except her husband. With Yelland's aid, he was becoming a conspicuous success, and his ambition blinded him to the price which he was perhaps paying for Yelland's help. An obvious disintegration of character began to show in her. She grew hard and reckless and brilliantly gay. She became conspicuous in a looser set of politicians and political corruptionists whom Yelland introduced into her home, and it was apparent that she was now more interested in Yelland's ambitions than in her husband's. Yelland had set his heart on becoming a Senator at Washington. She was helping him in a social way.

What was really going on in the husband's mind became plain enough in the course of time. He was waiting until he could make himself independent of Yelland. He employed detectives to watch and follow his wife till he had all sorts of evidence against her. With every pretense of living blindly in a fool's paradise, he accumulated money and power enough to be able to act against her, without giving either her or Yelland the least suspicion of his enmity, and using her intrigue with Yelland to further his own private ambitions all the time.

Then, suddenly, he started an action for divorce, but with diabolical cleverness he did not name Yelland as a co-respondent. He did not implicate Yelland in any way. He named two other



This striking and unusual portrait of Mrs. Lydig by the distinguished artist Veber is characterized by that touch of the bizarre which is so typical of his work.

men, against whom he had plenty of evidence. She had been unfaithful to Yelland. She had first fallen in love with a young actor who was one of Yelland's intimates, and she had been recklessly careless in her relations with him. When he deserted her, she turned to another man, deceiving Yelland and despising her husband, who, she knew, had for his own reasons winked at her intimacy with Yelland.

Her husband divorced her and turned her out, disgraced and notorious, after cruelly exposing her in court. If Yelland had been named as a co-respondent, public opinion might have compelled him to marry her, but he was free to abandon her now. He had every excuse for it. And if he was to go to Washington as a Senator, he would certainly not be helped by having such a woman as his wife. That, evidently, had been part of her husband's design in not naming Yelland.

IT worked. Yelland turned his back on her. So did the other men who had been making love to her. She sold her jewels and took the boat to Cherbourg and disappeared. Her husband continued his successful career, living in their beautiful little home, hard-faced and cynical, a silent ruin of a man. Yelland went on making money and plotting his campaign for the Senatorship.

But on the ship on which she sailed there was a Republican boss of the period whose favor Yelland needed. She knew him. She enticed him into a *liaison* with her, and told him how she had been betrayed by Yelland and her husband, and won him to her assistance. When he returned to New York, he notified Yelland that he could never get his Senatorship unless he married her.

Perhaps Yelland had some decent feeling of remorse for what he had done to her, and wished to make amends. Or maybe his affection for her was strong enough, when supported by his ambition, to persuade him that they could both forgive and forget and patch up a sort of happiness together. At any rate they married, to everyone's surprise, with the secret promise of the Senatorship as a wedding present. But when they returned from their honeymoon, the Republican boss said to Yelland: "When I make a man United States Senator, he has to be some one I can trust. Do you suppose I could trust you, after the way you double-crossed this woman and her husband? Go back to Wall Street. I can't use your kind in Washington. You're too yellow."

That completed the general débâcle. All three were now equally wrecked. Her first husband, the lawyer, having lost his faith in loyalty and friendship, lived like a bandit of the law, plundering and betraying for his own profit, at the head of a group of financial highwaymen who bought and bankrupted public utilities of various sorts all over the country. He never married again. He closed up her house and kept it closed, moving about from suite to suite in the big hotels, without a permanent address outside his office, as if he were afraid of being trapped in a home. Yelland and she quarreled at once, and separated. She has disappeared abroad. Yelland is drugging himself with drink and dissipation, a typical routé of the theatrical district, living on the loot of his earlier raids in Wall Street, as shrewd and friendless as an old fox. Her pretty home stands empty, in charge of a caretaker in the basement, the upstairs doors and windows boarded over. It is as sad as a neglected grave.

FARTHER down the street is a handsome Georgian mansion that was built, twenty-five years ago, for one of the most fascinating women New York has ever known. A beautiful Southern girl of an impoverished family, well-educated and aristocratic, she came north, chaperoned by an old aunt, as the protégée of a railroad millionaire who took her away from a drunken husband and a tragic household in the South, and set her up in a decently elegant home of her own off Gramercy Square. She remained there for several years, known only to his men friends, entertaining brilliantly but avoiding any public appearances where she might be snubbed or slighted. It was at this time that she made her reputation as a hostess, out of the reports of the foreign writers and artists and musicians who praised her dinner-table as a most delightful oasis of culture in the general stupidity of fashionable life in those days.

One saw her at the opera, occasionally, at the races, at the horse show, chaperoned by her little old aunt and surrounded by men who squired her loyally. The women of position, of course, refused to know her and she would not receive any others. She had great poise. She seemed quite unconscious of the stares and the opera-glasses fixed on her box, and the buzz of scandalous gossip that started up wherever she appeared. She was of the

languorous type of Southern beauty, always at her ease, smiling intimately, listening with a graceful droop of the head, her eyes deeply attentive. Indeed, I think half her charm came from the way she listened. No man could resist it.

There were four men who formed the inner circle of her friends—four of the most distinguished men of the period in New York. The first, of course, was the old railroad builder who had brought her to the North. The second was an eloquent young preacher, a protégé of the railroad builder, newly installed in the pulpit of a Fifth Avenue church which his patron controlled. The third was the reigning heir of a huge fortune in Manhattan real-estate, a man of considerable culture and of strong personality. The fourth was an adventurer, a cousin of the railroad builder, a stock-gambler, a racing man. The three rich men were congenial friends who took turns in entertaining her and her circle on their yachts, in their Adirondack camps, on their shooting preserves abroad. The young clergyman went as a sort of court confessor. All four were married men, but the railroad millionaire was not living with his wife and family.

It was generally understood that all four were in love with her, and it was said that she was carrying on four separate intrigues with them. That, I think, was quite possible. When I knew her, later, her most striking quality to me was her universal amiability. Any man who was in love with her seemed to appeal to her like an affectionate child. She was instantly touched and sorry for him. She accepted gifts from him as if he were a small boy bringing her a bouquet of wilted daisies. She tried to look serious at his rages and his jealousies when he learned that she did not keep her smiles for him alone, but she never seemed to succeed in understanding his angry possessiveness, and certainly she never succumbed to it. After a time, like a jealous boy, he became apparently satisfied with the idea that he was the favorite of her affections, and he made terms with the others and joined them in general devotion to her.

CERTAINLY those four men made some such terms with each other and with her. In spite of gossip, there was no open scandal about her. Even the little backstairs publications that lived on social blackmail and salacious tattle, in those days, did not dare attack her. Her three cavaliers were too powerful and determined. They not only wielded the clubs of politics and finance; they could use more immediate weapons; and when one daring editor printed a note about her that was ironically complimentary, her stock gambler sent a suave criminal to the editorial office, from among his friends of the race-track and the prize-ring, and the frightened editor never mentioned her again.

She was so thoroughly protected that the newspapers even printed respectfully and without comment the announcement of her engagement to marry the stock-gambler. His wife had just died. He had made a famous *coup* in the stock-market and retired with the reputation of the man who broke the bank at Monte Carlo. Everyone expected to hear that a war to the death had broken out between him and the other three—and particularly with the old railroad autocrat who had given her so much. Everyone waited breathlessly to hear the first shots, especially in the financial district, where rival properties were involved; but they all waited in a discreet silence, and no whisper of the facts in the situation found a public voice. And they all waited in vain. Her three discarded cavaliers attended her wedding. They went to the house-warming that she gave, on her return from her honeymoon, in the mansion which her husband had built for her. They joined in a campaign to force the fashionable society of the time to recognize and receive her. And they succeeded.

It was not difficult. The curiosity about her was so great that everyone wanted to meet her. Most of the women who might have snubbed her were married to men who could not afford to antagonize her protectors. And those protectors quite frankly used all their influence to force her social acceptance by intimidation, the favors of friendship, deliberate bribery, and every other means within their power. They were assisted, of course, by her own charm, her unflinching tact, her social acumen. She understood exactly with what shade of humility or insolence or bright indifference to behave to the various men and women whom she met. She knew how to ward off a dangerous enmity with meekness and how to frighten a stupid one with a deadly thrust. By the time I met her, she was securely installed in respectability as one of the most admired and envied hostesses among the fashionable rich, and her past was never mentioned. No one would think of refusing an invitation to her house. It was a distinction to be seen there, because she never invited

the stupid, no matter how rich, nor the *gauche*, no matter how brilliant.

She enjoyed her social triumph for only two or three years. On a motor-trip in the South, her car was overturned and she was crushed under it. Her spine was injured, and when they got her to a hospital, the doctors found that she was incurably paralyzed, unable to move hand or foot. Her railroad millionaire sent a special train to bring her to the coast, where one of her other cavaliers had his yacht awaiting her. Her clergyman hurried to her, and all four men brought her back to New York.

She received her callers, that winter, lying in state on a couch, fully dressed and covered with jewels. She was still beautiful, but her face was tragic. Everybody knew that her husband had already turned from her to another woman. Her clergyman lost his pulpit and left New York, because his patron rounded on him and withdrew his support, in an outburst of jealous antagonism which she was no longer able to control. Their quarrel involved her in a scandalous gossip which broke out the more venomously because it had been so long restrained. All her social sycophants deserted her, and she was powerless to prevent it. Her helplessness preyed on her mind. I went to see her one spring day, not long before her death, and found her lying by an open window, extravagantly dressed and slippered and bejeweled. A fly had lighted on her forehead, in the nurse's absence, and she could not brush it off. She was weeping. "Think of it!" she said. "I can no longer defend myself even against a fly!"

I remember that scene at the window whenever I pass the house. The door is equally tragic to see. Her husband, coming home alone at night, was attacked in the vestibule and mortally stabbed. He was found unconscious, by his servants, in the morning.

A surgeon was sent for, and it was given out that an emergency operation for appendicitis was performed on him, that morning. He died in a few days, under the surgeon's care, after a succession of bulletins had deceived the public about his condition. The house was sold. It is occupied, now, by a wealthy family from the West who are ignorant of its history.



The specially interesting photographic study of Mrs. Lydig reproduced above is the work of Arnold Genthe, New York.

ANYONE who knows fashionable life in New York could tell stories enough of this sort to fill a volume. It is quite another matter when one looks around for a happy home to describe. They are as scarce as the homes of poverty in that part of the city. The most obvious one in my recollection was the home, let us say, of the Brevorts.

They were of an old Knickerbocker family who had been rich for several generations, and Billy (Continued on page 121)

That's Why the Flying Fish Flew

Illustrated by
Grant Reynard

By
Robert
Emmet MacAlarney

Bob MacAlarney knows the theater well—and the motion pictures no less. And the ins and outs of New York likewise—all information gained and experiences undergone during the years of his activity on the newspapers of the metropolis.

"COMP'NY—'ten-shun! P'sent—ah—hums!"

That was the effect Jack Battersby's appearance produced upon the Broadway Spender Brigade. Had Manhattan been permitted to watch mobilization of its spender legionaries, the line of rendezvous would have formed as follows:

Right resting comfortably upon the shattered remains of the Forty-second Street Country Club (the damp ægis of Old King Cole, in the Knickerbocker, has vanished, but its influence may be felt, in a score of cases hard by); left resting uneasily between the Hotel Castor and Hanley's; rear trying to rest on the Haxim Grill and the Barking Dog; right, left and rear actually resting upon Jack Battersby.

When you saw the charmed casserole circle perk up, after the theater, while omnibuses scrambled to clear a path to the corner table; when you heard the fat party, with gypsy set diamonds hobbling both little fingers, wheeze into a nimbus of henna-ed tresses that "the Broadway speed-boy" was coming, you divined that Jack Battersby was on his way. He was.

Battersby had arrived, unannounced, after the Armistice. All Snapper Gellatly knew about him—and Gellatly, the ex-jockey sporting tailor, was supposed to possess his confidence to an even greater extent than Armand, the head-waiter at Trittori's—was that he hailed from the Middle West, and had been with the devil-dogs at Château Thierry. The latter fact had not been volunteered. It had been revealed by a fitting-clinic, in one of Gellatly's taupe-shrouded cloisters—a shade of extra padding would be necessary, upon the right shoulder, the utter symmetry of which had been altered by circumstance.

"And forget it," Battersby had snapped. "I have—that is, I do, until I pass a garbage can. Take a million garbage cans, and upset them—that's Sir Galahad going to combat, Twentieth Century style."

Battersby's misty origin, however, did not handicap the heraldry experts of Longacre. They fashioned for him, expeditiously, a coat-of-arms which would entitle him to jazz fanfare from any restaurant orchestra where the currency-burning boys bivouac. It was mostly gules, with one blank quarter—for the bar sinister of bankruptcy, which would complete the device in due course.

He tapped the faucet of legal tender in more than one bank; the check color-scheme of a single institution wearied him. There were mornings when the keenness of headache made the salmon pink of the Ninetieth National less stimulating than the mottled blue of the Drivers' and Bakers' cash caravansary. And he never acknowledged the fullness of his given name; the

"Can you beat it?" said Battersby as if talking to himself. "Some one else has just left me four millions!"



signature attached to his calls for coin was always "Jack Battersby." The paying tellers of a dozen steel and concrete barricades knew that chirography well indeed.

To the Speed-boy had come all of the cumulative honors which Broadway awarded. It was he who usually managed to be in the way, when a foul was knocked into the first-base boxes at the Polo Grounds. The last time the Giants and Yankees were battling in a World Series, he had made a miraculous stop, saving the consort of the acting mayor from at least loss of millinery. The great Jawn McGraw himself had grinned approvingly as His Acting Honor arose and grasped the hand of Battersby, while the grandstand rocked with applause.

Naturally this sort of thing got the Speed-boy into the papers. Everything he did seemed to procure him top of column, next to impure reading matter. Certain temerarious Longacre freshmen frequently averred—but not too loudly—in those haunts where Battersby largess was nightly dispensed, that the Speed-boy



hired a press-agent. This, however, was a canard.

He had not meant to break into print when he gave a daybreak supper, in Hickey's Plunge, with life-preservers, one-piece bathing-suits and cork tables as chief ingredients of the *mise en scène*. The *Gloat* played that for two columns. Why not? His yellow-taxi hippodrome, for selected entries from the Jollity Theater's "Mandalay Maid" chorus, at one A. M., down Fifth Avenue, from the Sherman Statue to the Carston Club—Battersby doing an unsuccessful *Ben Hur* to the *Messala* of Fordie Heatherton, who won—had not even been tipped off to Jerry Murtagh, captain of the precinct; and Murtagh was an old friend—proving it in police court the next day. Battersby had provided cash bail for all concerned. Of course Tody Sparks, the Jollity publicity man, grabbed at this joyously and tried to make the management think he had devised the stunt.

Hadn't the Speed-boy been attemptedly incognito when he maneuvered Inez Gilhooley, the militant anti-gambling mænad, with five equally good-looking sisters, sashed and bannered, downtown to hold a midday meeting in front of the Stock Exchange? He had winced when a score of brokers, who knew him well—having separated him from much margin now and then—identified him on the steps of the Subtreasury, and enwrapped him, and the Gilhooley girls, in a mile of ticker tape.

There was no trick that Battersby had missed. And although even Armand, at Trittori's, began to wonder when he would begin to falter in his stride, he had given no sign. His cash and—what is more important—his credit remained unimpaired.

My, but he was a sight for sore eyes, in Gurley's, where a special ice-box compartment held the violets and orchids the Speed-boy was sure to be demanding at sundown. He was a byword in Gasoline Alley, where his striped red and blue car was fly-paper to envious drivers when he tumbled out of his potential eighty horses for a chat with the sales-manager of the Millennium, who was having built for him a calendar-beating 1928 model. Battersby was a chassis futurist.

Broilers of Longacre, the grisettes of Manhattan's bank-note

Barbizon, murmured breathlessly among themselves that he commended taxi-fleets for the sheer zest that resided in watching the meter clocks tick. There was no denying it; a young Lochinvar had come out of the Middle West, and of all the real money, his was the best. Only one broiler in the "Mandalay Maid" would have gathered whom you meant had you mentioned young Lochinvar in her hearing. That was Mona Halligan, third from right end, in the front row, when Belle DeLacy sang "That's Why the Flying Fish Flew."

It had taken Mona Halligan many weeks to learn to be more than civil to Jack Battersby; many additional weeks elapsed before she liked him

well enough to ride in his raucous racing car, sunk so low between the wheels that you could reach out and scrape asphalt with your fingertips. Even yet she was not certain she would continue to like him while he was engaged in burning money. Exotic? Bizarre? Altogether; and not according to broiler tradition. But it was the way Mona Halligan felt.

She was convinced that as long as the Speed-boy

could produce a gold-mounted fountain pen and scrawl signatures upon the bottom of pink and blue slips of paper, he would never grow up into a man. And Mona Halligan, almost twenty-one, not getting for a week's enthusiastic pirouetting as much as Battersby tipped Armand, after a nicely served dinner—Mona Halligan wished to marry a man, when she married, and not a bank-note destroyer.

Belle DeLacy was the first to classify Battersby's pursuit of Mona as more than a frag-

ment of omnivorous interest in each and every chorus cog. Miss DeLacy—"Miss" through program expediency only, and the spouse of Cyril Blount, floridly Apollosque stage manager of the Jollity's new hit—had liked the way Mona Halligan employed ankles and slipper-tips on the opening night of the production. That the pony dancer still put the same energy into her work, after more than a year's run, had anchored the liking firmly.

If "The Mandalay Maid" had accomplished anything worth while, this had been injecting a modicum of Kipling research up and down Broadway. Even the aproned girl ushers, and the four Jollity ice-water cadets—one for each aisle—knew where Rangoon was, and could spell *Supi-yaw-lat* without double-o-ing the first syllable.

The picturesque Belle DeLacy always inched toward the foots to lead the audience in singing the refrain, using her "whackin' white cheroot" (exclusively provided by the manufacturer of Pompeian Puffs, "the cigarette de luxe," with credit under the name of the costumer) as a baton. You used to hum it with her yourself—remember?

(Continued on page 133)



She had not asked him to surrender his career, his ambition, his honor—merely his wife.

The Story So Far:

VALERIE DANGERFIELD had always had everything from life. Now, when this handsome stranger so intrigued her with the shadow of sadness on his face, she sought to have him also. It was a little later, at a musicale, that she was introduced to him and learned that his name was Blair Fleming—and met his silly little overdressed wife, and thought she understood that look of tragedy in his eyes. Later Mrs. Fleming invited Valerie to a week-end party at the mountain resort of Arrowhead Lake. And Valerie so contrived it that she should drive Fleming up the dangerous mountain road in her own car the evening after the others had assembled. Halfway up the difficult ascent, they were caught in a terrific cloudburst, and barely escaped going over the precipice. All that night they sat side by side in the storm-girt islet of the car. When daylight and cleared skies woke them from a doze, they found the crippled car unmovable, and were forced to trudge up the muddy road toward their destination. What, they wondered forebodingly, would Blair's wife Amy say? And what would she suspect? And yet there had been nothing—nothing, that is, except one kiss tempted from Fleming when Valerie had slipped near the cliff-edge and he had caught her.

A camping fisherman provided them with breakfast; his tent afforded Valerie shelter wherein to bathe and to change her bedraggled apparel; and his little car conveyed them the remaining distance to the cottages of the Arrowhead resort—and to Amy.

There fortune surprised and favored them. For Amy was out strolling with the Englishman Jimmy St. John; Valerie inad-

vertently and unobserved came upon them foolishly philandering—and realized that Mrs. Fleming was in no position to attack Blair and Valerie for their adventure. . . . It was the following morning, as the various guests were packing up and saying good-by, that Fleming, passing Valerie, groaned without looking at her: "I love you! I love you!" And later Valerie said to him: "I heard you. And it made me very happy. For I love you!"

Later Valerie arranged a meeting with Blair: she drove to San Bernardino to replevin her repaired car; he went thither by train, and met her; they drove homeward through the night together. And Valerie delivered her ultimatum:

"If you love me enough to get free from your wife somehow, then I'll know you love me enough to deserve my love. I'm nobody, but my love is all I've got to give, and I'm not going to pitch it down under any man's feet. You figure out some way to break up your happy home and then come to me, and I'll be waiting."

Blair gasped at the suddenness, the brutal frankness of it, and mumbled: "But—but—you—mean—"

"You know what I mean, and I mean it more than anything you ever knew any woman to mean before. If the cost is too much, if the test is too severe, if it isn't convenient for you—or if you have any reason on earth for going on as you're going on—why, I sha'n't blame you. I'll understand perfectly." (*The story continues in detail.*)

By Rupert Hughes

Illustrated by Will Foster

THIS is the story of a girl who found the great love of her life in a man who was not free, and sought to have him none the less. Only Rupert Hughes with his great gifts and from the experience of the fourteen novels he has published in these pages, could present this difficult theme with such conviction and power.

THEY were going back over the same road that they had traveled together twice before—once, as almost strangers in a mustering storm, once, in the sunlight as beginners in love, but with his wife and his wife's gallant on the front seat to forbid all interchange of thought. Now they ran through a fragrant vast garden of moonlight with love declared, but baffled by her pride, and his—what?

The road might have been three different roads in three different climes at three different epochs. They themselves were almost different people on each occasion.

Valerie drove her car as if the furies pursued her with whips slashing. She had propounded to her avowed lover a question of the utmost simplicity: did he love her well enough to sacrifice and destroy everything he had built up before he met her? She had more than hinted the answer: if he did not love her so well as that came to, he did not love her at all.

Yet, with the answer ringing in the air about him, he did not give it.

She had not asked him to surrender his career, his ambition, his honor, or anything worth while—merely his wife.

She had wanted to make him as great as he ought to be. She had dreamed of helping him to fame, to wealth, power. She would compel her father to take him up and have him elected governor of California, then Senator. They would go on to Washington, and she and her father would guide and build him to the coming of the great day when he would be swept into the Presidency.

She would make him a king, an emperor, a plutocrat, a swayer of multitudes, a millionaire who tossed a hospital here, sent a relief-fleet there with food for swarms of starving foreign children. He and she would go together on errands of increasing splendor and mercy; but mostly they would seek the rich solitude of each other's companionship.

All she asked him was to free himself for his destiny, and give up nothing that made him happy or helped him to his place. She asked him to shake off only the powdered, henna-tinted claws of that wife of his—the least worth-while woman that ever lived. And he had not cried:

"Of course! I give her up without a moment's thought! I toss her overboard with joy!"

Valerie's self-respect writhed at the humiliation it had brought upon itself. She was dazed to think how she had misjudged the man. She had laid her love, her first love, her great love, in the dust before a coward, a shilly-shallyer, a prig whose sense of obligation and conventionality and conscience was downright caddish.

SHE sent her car forward in so mad a rush that the tires sang on the pavement. The landscape shot backward in a blur. When she passed other cars, they vanished with a deafening choked-off whoop. She overtook and darted around the motors ahead of her with no delay for approaching cars. She grazed their fenders with a recklessness that brought yells of rage and warning from invisible strangers whose lives she had imperiled no less than her own.

What did she care? If she were killed, it would be good riddance of a world that was all trash. If not, she would at least be the sooner back to town, the sooner rid of this lawyer at her side, this justice-of-the-peace who must weigh all sides of the case before he delivered his decision.

She disliked him intensely. Yet she could not dislove him all at once. She could not run away from her yearning for him.

They had gone miles before he moved. Then he put his hand toward her with a commanding gentleness, but did not touch her;

she slowed down to hear what he wanted to say:

"Draw off to the side of the road. I want to tell you something."

He wanted to tell her something! Words! Arguments! When one phrase shouted into her ear would be enough, when the need was rather for a divine velocity that should oversweep all obstacles.

He nodded back at a very arbor of love beneath a stately community of palms, with geraniums clambering the huge, studded boles and losing their crimson multitudes in the domes of down-sweeping fronds.

The headlights of the car had snatched the little Eden from the dark for only a moment before they gave it back.

"That would have been a good place," said Fleming.

It pleased her to yield as ungracefully as possible to his demand, and to choose no prettier a haven than the vast shadow of a warehouse, filled no doubt with crated oranges, the wine and flesh of ten thousand trees, for the air was faintly spiced with their aroma.

She tooled the car into the lee of the moonlight, and at the dreariest deep of dark brought it to a stop, and shut off the engine, and the lamps. She found herself a cigarette, took the lighter from his hand, let it snap back into its socket, puffed out a jet of smoke, and said: "Well?"

He started to speak, but paused to light a cigar, which he rather studied than smoked.

Valerie was about ready to throw in the clutch and set off again in resentment of his deliberation, when he spoke at last:

"Valerie—" Her spine stiffened. What right had he left to call her by her first name? He stared at the evil eye of his cigar, and went from bad to worse.

"As I see it, the one we've got to consider first is—Amy."

She threw her head up in fiery wrath. Really, the man was mad, quite mad!

"You can't put yourself in Amy's place, or understand her, of course. And I don't expect you to. But she has some rights, and—we've got to protect them."

"We?" she gasped with a wild mockery.

"We."

This angered her again, but less than his gentle reference to Amy. She hated to have him speak without hate of a woman she hated. It was the most gauche of all his gaucheries. His voice softened a little, but his words were appalling:

"There are a few things I've got to tell you about Amy—and me."

"Go on," she said, but with a quick hoarseness, such a catch in her throat that she put her hand to it in sudden fear. What was he planning to say about that woman and himself? What was their relation? She could imagine all too well what it had been, what it was still, perhaps—no doubt. Was he going to put those horrible facts into words?

Was he going to tell her that their union was too close to be broken, that she herself was a hopeless outsider who could never hope to decoy him from his devotion?

She saw herself suddenly in a new and garish light as a cheap siren practicing her wiles in front of a home. He seemed to feel that something terrified her, for he reached for her hand impulsively—but remembered perhaps, that she had told him she would cut his throat if he touched her. He checked his hand in midair, and said:

"If you didn't strike me as the bravest and honestest woman I ever met, I'd not mention these things. But—you want the truth, don't you?"

"I'd always like to know it," she laughed dismally, "but I don't always care to tell it."

"No more do I. There's nothing more unwelcome to most people. But I'd like to deal in it with you—always."

That "always" startled her. There was, then, to be a hereafter for him and her—an "always!"

"I'm not going to beat about the bush with you. Decent men don't talk about their wives, but you've done me the honor of falling in love with me—'falling' is the word. I wouldn't believe it if anybody on earth had told me but you. But, since you've been so honest with me, I've got to be honest with you."

"You don't know much about me, if anything. Otherwise you'd have passed me by. But I woke your pity, and you decided to save me. The funny thing about it is that I didn't know I needed saving. I thought I was getting along all right. I had a home—a nice-enough place, better than the average; full of dewdabs and gimcracks, but lots of people like 'em."

"I had a wife, a pretty thing; she kept herself slim and clean and tried to be in step with the procession. She'd got over loving me, if she ever did. But then, most wives outgrow their love, as far as I can see. Getting married may be a romance, but staying married seems to be mainly a habit."

"Amy and I were drifting along as well as the average, far better than most couples. We had quit quarreling—got past that stage of love. She had lost all interest in my work, if she had ever had any. But why should she be interested? What is there in the practice of a criminal lawyer to interest a woman like Amy? As far as I can see, most married couples take no interest in each other's chief interests. Fidelity gets to be half laziness and half cowardice. Most people don't want romance in their own lives. They'd rather read about it. That's why newspapers and magazines and moving pictures succeed so enormously."

"But most people are too tired at night, and too sheepish all day, to want any adventures of their own. They leave the big love-affairs to the professional lovers, the way they leave the baseball and football and athletics and the prize-fighting to the professionals."

"Millions of people go out and watch the games, and the rest stay home and read about them. It's the same way with love, I think. We like to call it virtue, but what's the difference between the average man's or woman's faithfulness and the same person's abstinence from a football game? Most of these fat wives and lean wives, the thick-necked and the skinny husbands are no more tempted to go out and have a love-affair than they are tempted to take up a tennis racket and go out on the court and play a hot game in the sun."

"If they tried it, they'd puff and pant and sweat and probably drop dead. A daily dozen exercises and an hour of massage is more exercise than most people get. A little sneaking flirtation in a dance, a few naughty jokes, reading the spicy scandals in the papers, and that is as far as they dare to go."

"They sit back and stare at the young people, and say how terrible they are, how daring and reckless and unrestrained. Of course, they are. They're young."

"It's only the young people as a rule that play tennis and swim far out and do the heavy athletics. It's always been so, and it always will be."

"Once in a while you find a man or a woman who keeps fit, loves exercise, loves to be strong and agile, and loves to love. Those few get into a lot of trouble, but they have all the fun. They are the only ones that live life."

"The rest of us sit around and pile up fat in the head, the neck, the body and the heart. Fatty degeneration of the heart is what most people call virtue and self-restraint. Restraint! Lord, they've got no selves left to restrain!"

"I was like that. I went from my stupid home to my stupid office and the stupid court. Poor criminals who were afraid of the world and did something terrible in a spasm of fright, ran to me for protection from the consequences. The grandeur of the law was after them; the majesty of the court frowned on them; the living grave of the jail, or the gallows or the chair, waited for them."

"All I have in me is a tremendous pity for the weak, and a tremendous desire to fight the strong. And that's why I can't crush Amy or knock her out of my path."

AT the sudden recurrence of the word "Amy," Valerie started. She found that her cigarette was out, and hunted another. He was so absorbed in his thoughts that he did not notice her need of a light till she had reached for the lighter. He mumbled an apology and went on:

"You see, she can't help being Amy any more than you can

help being your glorious self. She never had your chance. Neither did I."

"You've always had just about what you wanted. You took what you pleased. When you got tired of it, you threw it away. You have always been rich, and known the brilliant phases of life."

"I come of a different world and a different breed. My people weren't the kind you read about, sweet, simple, obscure souls. They weren't poor but honest. They weren't either very poor or very honest. But neither were they rich and ruthless, much as they'd like to have been."

"Still, modest as they were in their fortunes and vices and virtues, we were the big people in our little town. Amy, though—Amy came from the other side of Main Street."

"She was the prettiest girl in school, all the prettier for the plain clothes that she tried to make pretty. I used to take her to all the dances and picnics. When I went away to school and college, she always cried; and when I came back, she was always waiting for me."

"I had reason to believe that she wasn't altogether idle while I was gone. But then, neither was I. Still, I'd got so in the habit of feeling sorry for her and wishing her to be happy, that I was never jealous of my substitutes. If I should find her in the arms of a handsome lover when I get home tonight, I really believe I'd tell him I was much obliged."

"There's nothing big or heroic about me, you see. I simply couldn't start shooting on Amy's account. I might on yours. I'm so low that I wish to God that Amy had a lover now—a rich powerful count or something, who would carry her off to a foreign court and make her so happy she'd look down on me. But since she lost her girlhood bloom, she doesn't win much attention from men."

Valerie's heart leaped. Her lips sprang toward the words that flashed into her mind. If she told him about Amy's infatuation for Jimmy St. John, it would clear the whole fog. His mind would be at rest about the weakling woman who kept so strong a man helpless."

But it would be such a caddish thing to say, that her heart sickened at the task. It was the sort of thing that Amy would do. Therefore Valerie must not stoop to it. Besides, Blair was talking on. Would he never stop? Would he never reach the veiled conclusion of all this endless address to his jury of one?

THE trouble with Amy—or the good thing about her—is that she doesn't rouse passion. She wakens only pity or contempt, or feeble interest. She's something to pet."

"But how can you blame her for that? You've seen her. The poor little thing, with her tiny little mouth and her skimpy little heart! She didn't select 'em, did she? Her worst vice is being jealous and spiteful. She can spit and meow and scratch, but only like a kitten. That's her limit. She was born scared and discontented, without the power to run away from her fears or fight for her ambitions—if you could say she had any ambitions. There's billions of her in the world."

"She has a craze for pretty things. Beauty is beyond her reach. She's afraid of beauty—or what I call beauty—either in things or deeds. Cream and cushions and ribbons are her paradise."

"You can see she hasn't very good taste, though her timidity saves her from going very far wrong. She runs mostly to fluff—in dresses and ideas."

"She likes tassels on everything—even on people. But there's something about her that commands protection. She didn't trick me into marrying her. I asked her to marry me. I wasn't ready to marry. I had just come back home to take up practice, but she was so miserable in her home that I proposed to her. When I married her, there were no clients at my office. No money was coming in. I had to take any cases I could get—the kind the other lawyers wouldn't take. I had to work hard to save my shady clients. I became a good lawyer. I am a good lawyer."

Valerie liked to hear him say that. She hated a conceited man, but she despised a timorous. She had listened hungrily to his autobiography, though every reiteration of Amy's name made her wince. She had longed to know what he had been before she met him. He was coming up to her now out of oblivion, as a photograph takes definition in the developing bath in the dark-room."

"When I say I'm a good lawyer, I'm telling you a secret. I've never had much chance to win real laurels, for there's always a certain sordidness and suspiciousness about criminal lawyers. They don't bring me cases where I can pose as the



While Valerie was trying to answer guardedly, she was subduing a Bacchic frenzy to run after her love.

defender of the public, the denouncer of vice and the savior of morals. The clients that come to me are the shabby, hounded things, scared to death of what they have done, and scared to death of what the law is going to do. They throw themselves on my mercy; and I automatically try to protect them from human vengeance. And that flatters my vanity too, I suppose—just as it used to flatter me to help Amy, and buy her things, and dry her tears.

"It's funny how hard I've worked for Amy, loving her less every time I did anything for her. I'm a yellow dog to say it, but I'm talking truth to you. You're the only woman I ever met that seemed to want it.

"All my life I've been slaving at dingy tasks to keep Amy from being dingy. It's grown to be a habit. I brought her out here on a case that called me to California. Amy had always heard the climate well spoken of, and she always likes what's well spoken of. She wanted to stay. So I stayed. It was slow work getting started again; but I'm doing pretty well, thanks to a lot of unpleasant publicity.

"The best thing about Los Angeles to Amy is that there's not much rain here, and lightning storms are almost unheard of. She hates 'em both. I love deluges and thunderbolts.

"I first came to know you in a cloudburst on a mountain-side. You made fun of the lightning. You weren't afraid of death. You even made fun of the gossips and the rules. I had never met anybody quite like you. I had fallen into the rut. All I did was try to buy pretty knick-knacks for Amy and earn the money by saving poor weasels and coyotes from the law."

He hesitated, but before Valerie could speak, he continued:

"As for anything brilliant or daring or beautiful, I had lost the knowledge that there were such things. I was a plain, average, stupid, overworked drudge. There are millions of me. The highest adventure I had was to deal with criminals and courts, and to swap a few stories with the men I met. Even that was such an escape, that all the laughter there was in my soul used to explode, because it had no other vent. You liked my laughter, you said. You probably wouldn't have liked it if you'd heard what roused it.

"When I saw how free and reckless you were, I could only think of you as a—forgive me—a kind of loose woman. Funny, what a difference there is between being free and being loose."

"You were beautiful and daring, and I assumed you were just a—a bad girl. I liked you just that way. You tempted me. I wanted you."

"I thought I was making a declaration of independence when I decided that it was about time I broke the old Seventh Commandment. I thought you wouldn't mind."

"You see what a cheap and ordinary piece of clay you chose to fall in love with. My arms ached to lay hold of you."

Valerie's heart beat high. No woman can be altogether insulted by a man's interest in her body, or completely pleased to learn that she is only a soul to him. Yet the vilest wanton wants to be held sacred, too, as something more than flesh.

"If you had been what I thought you were—and what no end of people must think you—we'd have done what a lot of people do on rare opportunities. We'd have acted like a couple of sneak-thieves, and nobody would ever have known the difference. It probably wouldn't have made any real difference in the lives of either of us unless we'd been caught. Then the world would have had to get majestic. Or we might have bluffed it out as so many do."

"But something kept me back. And we spent the night in innocence. You fell asleep, unharmed. And you were so pathetic—in such a different way from Amy, like a weary tigress, you might say—that a great tenderness for you welled up in my heart. And you became—you became—holy to me."

"When we climbed the mountain, in the morning, you were so plucky and so proud in spite of your ghastly fatigue, that I revered you. Then you almost went over the cliff—my God, what I'd have missed if I had missed my clutch at your arm! It makes my heart race to think of it."

THE smoke from his cigar came in quick puffs like a visible pulse. Valerie remembered that brief slide on the wet clay to the brink of the precipice, and his quick arm swinging her back from the grave to the hard earth. The world was a dangerous place of most unsteady footing.

Fleming went on: "If you had slipped out of my grasp then, I'd never have known what I missed. I'd have gone through life a poor hack of a lawyer with no more imagination of what love can really be than a man born blind has of a sunrise."

"I kissed you, too, that morning. And you returned the kiss. I didn't know till then what human lips could be. I didn't know what the word 'love' meant. But I know now, and I'd rather be floating on the ocean with one arm about a broken spar and the other arm about you, than—than—"

His hands groped for a word and fell helpless.

Valerie's sky was alight again. She was quivering with the desire that was shaking him. Her rage at herself, her contempt of him, had gone back into the fire. Her love and this man were once more everything.

And then he had to revert to Amy! Would that thorn never be out of her flesh, that cinder out of her eye? She lighted another cigarette to keep her hands from wringing one another frantically.

"But I must finish with Amy. As a matter of fact, I finished with her long ago. I never began with her in the sense that you mean to me. Even the kind of life we once lived was pretty well finished."

"We've had less and less in common, and we didn't start with much. The only thing we shared was the house, and even there"—his voice dropped a little—"we had separate rooms. My hours interfered with her beauty sleep."

"Still, I hadn't thought much of that. As far as I could judge, most human families have about as much real sympathy as a prairie dog, an owl and a snake that occupy the same burrow. A lawyer gets almost as sad a view of home life as a doctor does."

"I thought I was lucky to have as much as I had, and as little trouble. Now I know what a pauper I was. You have passed by, and I'll never be able to endure that torpor again."

"It isn't fair to Amy, either. I've been keeping her from life, too. She's not really happy. She's just trudging along from day to day. There may be somebody in the world that can lift her to the heights as you lift me. I hope to God there is."

"For our life together is a farce—the kind of farce that is a failure. There's nothing on earth so sad as a farce that fails."

"The most farcical thing about it is that it was Amy who brought you and me together. She dragged me to the musicale where I met you. She dragged you to the mountain lake and took

a pride in throwing me in with you. Of course, she thought Mrs. Pashley would be along, but—even when I met her that morning and she learned that you and I had been all night alone together, she didn't make a row."

AGAIN Valerie was seized with an impulse to tell him that Amy's tolerance was due to a sense of her own guilt. It poisoned her to think of this big-souled man wasting his protection on that guilty woman, that coward in sin, that she-Judas. But Blair would not let her break in. He wanted to get his story told once for all.

"That's another reason why we've got to be very careful of Amy. It would be too cruel for you, of all people, to be indifferent to her feelings when you are a goddess to her. Meeting you brought the biggest thrill her tame little life has ever had."

"You see, her highest ambition is to meet people in high society—whatever that means. She'll kow-tow to an artist, or a poet, or an actor, if she can't get anybody of social importance. But her real idols are 'the upper classes.' Some time ago she was put on a committee with your aunt, and she nearly worked herself to death, all to please Mrs. Pashley. It was a musical committee, and she can't bear real music. But she swallowed it somehow, because it brought her in touch with Mrs. Pashley. And Mrs. Pashley's principal distinction was that she was your aunt!"

"That night at Spirovitch's where you and I met—Amy didn't want to go, because she hates sonatas and things like that. But Mrs. Pashley had promised to be there. So Amy must go. She dragged me along. And I didn't want to go. But Amy bullied me into it. If we could only foresee what we are doing! We seem always to be forcing ourselves into the wrong places."

"I was tired out. I had a desperately hard case to try, but I had to go to keep Amy quiet. I sat outside trying to work on my case. Mrs. Pashley came and I gave her my seat, and went to sit by you."

"I could see that you were beautiful, but I was busy—and very tired. Then you met Amy. If you could know the bliss it was to her to shake your hand! She was so frightened that she invited you to tea. When you accepted, she nearly fainted. I held my arm out to catch her, she turned so pale."

"She could talk of nothing else all the way home. She raved about you half the night. She drove me crazy with her talk of Miss Dangerfield this! and Miss Dangerfield that! till I hated the sound of your name."

"The next morning Amy was still Valerie-mad. She took all the money I had with me to buy extra things to make herself and her home worthy of you. It was pure snobbery, but it was pitiful."

"When I got back that night, she was out of her wits. You had not only called and sipped her tea, but when she had grown hysterical enough to invite you up to the mountain camp, you accepted!"

"She kept saying: 'I'm made! We're in society! Valerie Dangerfield is my friend!' She paced the floor, singing your name."

"She abused me for not getting excited about you. Her one consolation will be that she lost her husband to Valerie Dangerfield. I can see her bragging: 'Well, it took Valerie Dangerfield to get him away from me!' Isn't it pitiful?"

"I don't think it's loathsome. I think it's pitiful. I can't bring myself to harm her. I can't bear the thought that you, of all people, should be the one to trample on Amy. I'd rather strangle her myself than have you hurt her needlessly."

"If you were in a theater fire, I can imagine you sitting in your place and burning to death rather than fight your way to safety over other people's bodies. You'd despise them for their cowardice and meanness, but you wouldn't tread them down, would you?"

"You might beat a tiger, or slap a duke in the face, or ride over a brute or beat an unruly horse into submission; but you don't want to hurt a kitten like Amy. You'd let her claw you and spit at you, but you couldn't crush her, could you? The thing we must do is to coax her to take her claws out of our hearts, and show her a bowl of milk or a mouse to play with first, and then we'll tiptoe away and escape."

"Isn't that the best way?"

SHE did not answer. There was no need to. She understood how right he was. Out here in the dark they could make plans that they could never carry out in the daylight. They could



"You don't really love me?" she raged. "Yet you dare—"

break the written laws, but they could not break the laws of their own characters.

"And now," he went on, "I've finished the longest speech I ever made outside of a court. And I wonder you're not sound asleep. Perhaps I've talked your love to death. But you had a right to see what sort of man you had the misfortune to love. If you can't endure me, now's the time to find it out.

"If you can't understand that all I've said is from love of you, then I can never make you understand, and there's nothing but unhappiness ahead for us. And I'd rather have you despise me and run away from me, than let me cause you unhappiness. Do you still love me, a little? Do you or don't you?"

He sat waiting for her reply.

She could not speak. She could only reach out and clench his forearm in her strong hand. He made to take hold of it, but withheld himself with a wrenching effort. He threw away the cold and frayed cigar that had gone out long ago. It was as if he threw away everything that was nauseous and clammy in

his heart, for he spoke with a hitherto unknown clang in his voice:

"And now for the big fight, and the paradise behind it! And may it come soon! For I can't wait long. I've missed too much of life already, and there's no telling how much is left."

Unknown to them, the wide belt of shadow that had covered them had grown narrower and narrower as the moon climbed above the roof of the warehouse. And now the shadow was gone. The sun of the night dawned upon them, and the ground about them was powdered with the impalpable hoar-frost of moonshine. The light glimmered on the glass of the windshield. It wove a glamour about the little silver figure on the radiator-cap. It glittered here and there on the metal.

It filled the world with a yearning more sorrowful than the gloom. It was elegiac with the woes of all the lovers who had dared to meet only in the moonlight and had been slain or parted by the daybreak.

But Fleming's heart was filled with such resolve that the moonlight could not intimidate him as it did Valerie. He spoke in his deepest tone:

"I'm going to have you! Nothing can stop me! Nothing can kill me till I've lived with you! Nothing else in life is worth having compared with you!

"If Amy will play fair with me, I'll play fair with her. She's weak, and we must be merciful. If she appeals to the world, though, and tries to make a scandal, then she's strong, and I can fight her without mercy. If she calls on the police—well, I'm always fighting the police. We'll give (Continued on page 102)



Illustrated by
John Held, Jr.

The Children's Day

By Robert Benchley

"I am glad," writes Mr. Benchley, "that circumstances now permit me to disclose what became of Mr. Peters, after the Christmas party in Dyke last year. Everyone has wondered, especially Mrs. Peters. Now I have word that Mr. Peters is coming home again. But whether the old homicidal Peters, or another, patient, tolerant and non-resisting, remains to be discovered."

OF all the dope-upsets, in a year when the dope was upset regularly every fifteen minutes by such irreverent iconoclasts as Tunney, Von Elm and Lacoste, perhaps the most astounding reversal of form and unexpected emergence in a new rôle was when Mr. Walter Peters was announced as Santa Claus for the forthcoming children's party at the Dyke Memorial Church.

Whatever Mr. Peters was at heart, it was not Santa Claus. His later and riper years had been devoted to a sedulous cultivation of an acutely anti-social frame of mind, with the result that great portions of Europe and America had been laid waste under his avenging hand. Santa Claus would never have done that. And furthermore, Mr. Peters didn't look like Santa Claus.

His selection for the rôle, and what is more important, his agreement to undertake it, were the result of an untimely laryngitis which descended on the kindly Mr. Roper (a Santa Claus of fifteen years' experience) and of the presence of Mrs. Peters in the Chair of the committee. It was a case of peace and quiet in the Peters home, a thing which Mr. Peters craved above all else. So, with a bilious eye and grudging grace, he donned the whiskers and red vestments of the merry old saint and appeared in the vestry at four-thirty on the afternoon before Christmas.

To begin with, Mr. Peters was a small man, and Mr. Roper was a large man; and even with the auxiliary bulk of the pillow which was tucked in at the front in unconvincing simulation of the legendary abdomen, the red smock hung in folds about the Peters torso, and the cuffs slid down over the Peters knuckles, making anything more effective than vague gestures impossible.

The beard, too, was wrong. Besides smelling of grease-paint, it covered most of Mr. Peters' face, making it necessary for him to employ a puffing and blowing usually associated with fat men dozing in armchairs. And even under this constant activity, the hair got into Mr. Peters' mouth and tickled his nostrils with an almost human persistence.

The fact that the vestry, in common with all vestries, was overheated, need not be gone into here. There are some things too unpleasant to talk about.

It was under these inauspicious signs that Mr. Peters took his

place by the huge tree to await the opening of the doors which was to let in the flood of eager kiddies. Already they could be heard in the Sunday-school room, and from the sound there were half a million of them, all in the last stages of neurasthenia.

"First they will come in and sit down over there," explained Mrs. Watrous, who had charge of the ice-cream, "and then you—"

"Supposing they won't sit down?" asked Mr. Peters, with his ear on the raging tumult on the other side of the door.

"Oh, they'll sit down, all right," reassured Mrs. Watrous, smiling. "We'll tell them that they won't get any presents if they don't sit down and be quiet."

"Yeah?" said Mr. Peters, to himself.

"Then you will be hidden here behind the chimney ready to come through when Mr. Rollins shakes the sleigh-bells. You just crawl through this opening and say, 'Hello, hello, everybody,' or anything that you think fits the occasion."

"Anything?" asked Mr. Peters.

"Anything that Santa Claus would say," said Mrs. Watrous. "Then you shake the snow off your shoulders—put some snow on Mr. Peters' shoulders, Miss Carney, please—and go over to the tree. There are the presents on the floor, one for each child, and all that you have to do is read off the name on each one, and when the child comes up, hand out the present. You might say a little something to each one if you feel inspired. Something jolly, you know."

Mr. Peters pressed his lips together grimly—including several strands of false beard, which he spat out.

"All right, open the gates!" he said. And under the sheltering cuff of the Santa Claus suit, he clenched his hidden right hand.

WITH the opening of the doors leading from the Sunday-school room, the avalanche of eager minors was started. There were not so many as the sounds had indicated—there couldn't have been—but there were enough to surround the tree in clamorous riot over the ineffective protests of Mrs. Watrous and Mrs. Peters.

"Now, children—" came the small, practically inaudible pipings



of the ladies in charge, "now, children! Don't crowd! Take your seats!"

The answer of the children to this was to upset the tree, and it was all that Mr. Peters (rushing out from his retreat behind the imitation chimney) and Mr. Rollins could do to push it back into position again. Mr. Peters' surprise entrance in character having thus been spoiled, he decided to stay out of hiding for good and help fight off the hordes of young Huns.

But at the sight of Santa Claus, a great shout went up, and half a dozen little boys made individual lunges with some idea of embracing the merry old saint. Mr. Peters, hampered by his long sleeves and blinded by his beard, could make no adequate resistance, and was pushed violently up against the wall.

"I'll bust one of you kids in the nose," muttered Santa Claus, pushing one of the larger boys away as well as he could.

"It's Mr. Peters! It's Mr. Peters!" yelled his antagonist.

"I'll Mr. Peters you!" And with this, the Spirit of Christmas disengaged his hand from his cuff sufficiently to tweak the small nose of one of his assailants, who immediately began to scream loudly that he had been foully attacked. This had its effect in frightening the others off Mr. Peters' chest and threw a rather sinister note into the party.

"Really, Walter," said Mrs. Peters, as the casualty was led off by his mother and the rest of the attacking party withdrew, "it does seem as if you might be careful not to hurt children. And you a Santa Claus!"

Mr. Peters said nothing, but adjusted his beard, which was up under his left temple, and breathed hard. He was a little ashamed of himself, but at the time, it had seemed to be his only course. It was one of the bigger boys, at any rate.

Resolved to atone for his un-Christmasy behavior, a somewhat chastened but still resentful Santa Claus set about the distribution of the gifts. The children were by this time in some semblance of order, and while Mrs. Watrous' prediction that they could be made to sit down had been a bit oversanguine, they did group themselves in approximate regimentation about the tree.

"Now pay attention, children," admonished Mrs. Watrous, "and Santa will give you each a nice present. And don't come up until your name is called."

With this, the lady withdrew and left the field to Mr. Peters.

Rolling his right cuff up to his elbow, he picked up the first package and, poking the beard away from his eyes, read off the name written on it: "Arthur Burley!"

There was a silence, but no one stepped up to claim the trophy.

PEACE ON EARTH
GOOD WILL T



"Arthur Burley!" read Mr. Peters again, this time with a little irritation in his voice.

Still there was no response, although a little girl named Edith Hurley made an abortive lunge toward the ringside, which was nipped in the bud by her mother, who said, loud enough for Mr. Peters to hear: "Look out, Edith dear—that man will hurt you."

Mr. Peters stopped and looked at Mrs. Hurley. "I will hurt no child who does not hurt me first," he said sullenly.

Mrs. Hurley gave a sharp, sarcastic laugh. "A fine Santa Claus, I must say!" she said. "Threatening the children!"

"I am not only threatening the children," said Mr. Peters, by this time belligerent to the point of fever. "I am threatening everyone in this room!"

"Walter!" whispered the unhappy Mrs. Peters from a corner. "All right, all right!" said her husband. "I just want to have it understood; that's all. . . . And now, where the hell is this Arthur Burley?" And he waved the package in the air.

Mrs. Watrous, considerably flustered at the warlike turn the Christmas party had taken, came up and looked at the name on the package.

"Arthur Duffy," she corrected, with bitter distinctness. And like a shot, Arthur Duffy was at the gift, trampling two little girls in his rush.

"Whoever wrote that name was drunk," asserted Mr. Peters, struggling with Arthur Duffy to get a second look at the handwriting. He then turned to the pile of presents again.

"Marion Dresser," he announced. "Take it or leave it!"

Marion Dresser was so small and so coy about the thing that Mr. Peters was again shamed into docility. He even said, "There you are, Marion," as he handed her the package, at which advance Marion burst into tears and ran screaming to her mother.

"You see, you've frightened them," said Mrs. Watrous. "You had better let me read the names off. You can hand me the presents."

And so Mr. Peters was demoted, rather to his relief, and the distribution was finished in comparative calm, although it became necessary, under the stress of constant bending over, to remove the pillow from the front of his trousers, a confession of deceit which called forth jeers and cat-calls from the more vindictive element among the boys.

The presents having been all given out, Mr. Peters was besieged by half a dozen raging mothers whose infants had been omitted from the largess. The general impression seemed to be that Mr. Peters had taken the presents for himself.

"It is very funny," said Mrs. Hatch threateningly. "I had a mechanical duck put there for Albert. What did you do with it?"

"I have a mechanical duck of my own, Mrs. Hatch," said Mr. Peters, "and I couldn't use another. Maybe Albert's walked off by itself. Have you looked in the Sunday-school room?"

"This is no joking matter, Mr. Peters," replied the irate mother. "Albert has just recovered from tonsillitis."

"I'm sorry to hear that," said the harassed Saint Nick.

"And he is in no condition to stand a disappoint-

ment like this." Mrs. Hatch began poking viciously among the loose papers on the floor.

Albert, who had indeed recovered from his tonsillitis to the extent of indulging in a frantic chase after the present of a boy smaller than himself, at this moment crashed into Mr. Peters from behind and landed in a heap at Mr. Peters' feet, bellowing that Santa Claus had knocked him down. An angry crowd of mothers and older children surrounded the hapless actor, and there were muttered suggestions of lynching. A hymn-book came hurtling through the air and caught him right behind the ear where the false beard ended its fatuous imitation. A reign of terror was clearly about to begin. Dyke, through its cadets, was about to destroy its dictator.

Snatching the cap and beard from his head, Mr. Peters crashed through the group that surrounded him, knocking down children and the smaller women in his rush. Out into the streets of Dyke he went, half Peters, half Santa Claus, tearing along to his home, where he disappeared from view. When Mrs. Peters reached home shortly after, he had locked himself in his room.

Trembling with apprehension, the worried wife knocked and called through the door: "Walter! You aren't going to do anything you'll be sorry for, are you? Remember, they're just little children, and it's Christmas."

"You shut up!" answered Mr. Peters. "I know my business."

"You wouldn't do anything to little children," pleaded his wife.

"You couldn't."

"No?" asked Mr. Peters.

"Please let me in, Walter," begged Mrs. Peters. "I want to talk to you."

The door was opened with a bang, and there stood Mr. Peters, dressed in his street-clothes, hair standing on end, and a noticeable dampness about the brow. He had evidently been fighting a great fight with himself. He had also been packing a bag.

"I'm leaving town tonight," he announced with a strangely quiet air. "I may not be back for a long, long time. I will let you know my address when I know it myself."

And Mr. Peters kissed Mrs. Peters, snapped the bag shut, and went out into the night. . . .

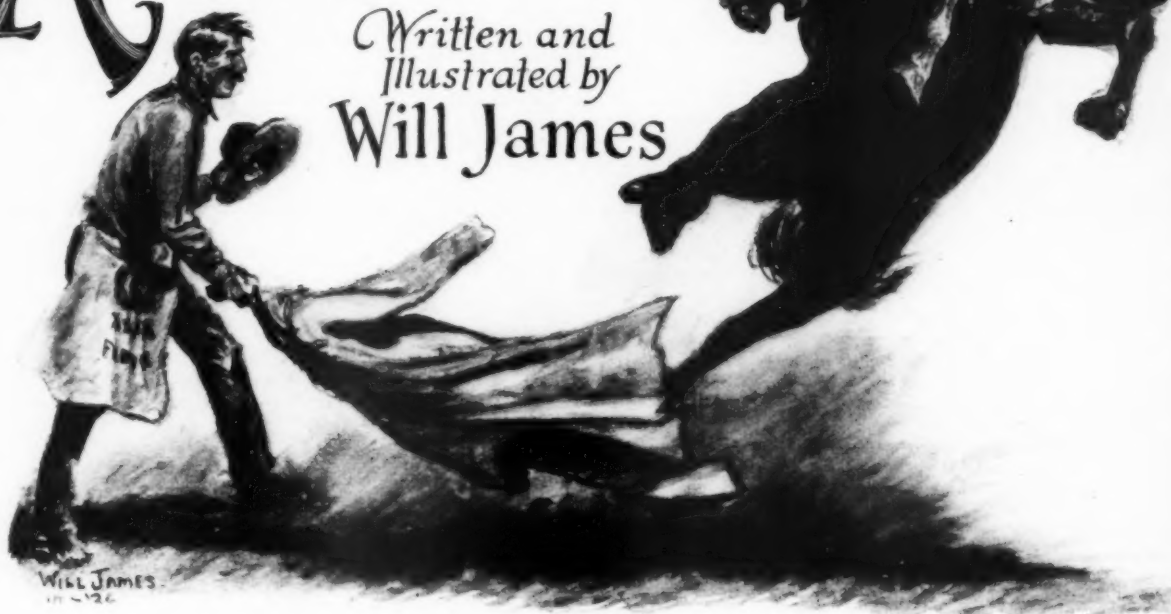
On a little island in the Mediterranean called St. Honorat, there is a quiet monastery, where men who have wearied of the turmoil of this world may go and find surcease. Into this haven there came one day late in January a little man who spoke no French but who made it clear that he was willing to renounce the pomp and pride of worldly existence and become a novice. He was provided with a robe and sandals, and after a period of probation, became Brother Peter.

On about the third day of Brother Peter's novitiate, sixteen of the brothers died very suddenly of ptomaine poisoning.



When in Rome—

Written and
Illustrated by
Will James



The cook interfered, and waving a yellow slicker, came to the rescue.

WILL JAMES' tales of cowboys are not written in Cranbury, Connecticut, or Bath, Maine, but from his own range near Pryor, Montana. There's no use looking for Pryor on the maps, for you'll not find it, though some day you may. "There's not a fence as far as you can see," Will writes, "nothin' but the grass ripplin' in the sun."

"THINGS are sure a-popping now, cowboys."

Them words skimmed over the prairie sod to where twenty or more of us riders were "throwing the last bait" of the day; and as one and all looked in the direction the talk was coming from, we glimpsed the smiling features of a long cowboy, the straw boss, a-riding in on us and acting like something had sure enough popped. But the grin he was packing had us all sort of guessing; it hinted most to excitement and nothing at all to feel bad about, but there again a feller could never tell by looking at Bearpaw what really did happen. He was the sort of feller who'd grin at his own shadow while getting away from a mad cow, and grin all the more if he stubbed his toe while hastening on the way to the nearest corral poles.

The grin spread into a laugh as he got off his horse and walked into the circle, where we'd been peacefully crooking elbows and storing away nourishment, but now, and since that *hombre's* appearance, all forks was still and all eyes was in the direction of that laughing gazabo and a-waiting for him to tell.

"You don't seem anyways sad about whatever it is that's a-popping," finally says an old hard-faced Tejano.

"No, I don't," answers that cowboy between chuckles. "I

take things good-natured, but *you'll* feel sad, old-timer, when some foreigner drops into camp some of these days and *orders* you to roach the manes of your ponies, brand calves afoot, and tells you that ropes and stock saddles aint necessary in handling range stock."

The old Texan just gawked at that, and couldn't talk for quite a spell, but finally, after his thoughts got to settling down to business on what Bearpaw had just said, his opinion of such proceedings came to the top and kicked off the lid.

"Any time I get off my horse and begins to pack myself around on foot after a slick-ear," he howled, "I just don't—not for no man. And as far as anybody coming around and ordering the manes of my ponies to be roached, that wouldn't be orders; it'd be plain suicide for the other feller."

There he stopped for a second and squinted at Bearpaw like as if that cowboy was trying to stir him up for a little fun or something.

"But what in Sam Hill are you driving at, anyway?" he asks.

"I'll be glad to tell you," says Bearpaw, "if you'll give me the chance." Then he went on to spread the news why him and the cow foreman had been called on to the home ranch the last couple of days.

"You boys wont believe me when I tell you," he begins, "but anyway, here's the straight of it: The Y-Bench" (Y) "layout is sold out and has done changed hands."

Here he held on a spell to sort of let things soak in, and looked around at us to see how that part of the news was taking effect. It was taking effect, all right, but we hadn't got anywheres near to realizing what that really meant to us, nor how it all come about when old Bearpaw follows on with an uppercut that lays us all out.

"Some lord or duke from somewheres in Europe has bought it,

and he's brought his stable valets along to show us how to ride. And what's more," he went on, "this here lord, or something, is dead set against these saddles we use, so he's brought along a carload of nice little flat saddles for us, and so light that even a mosquito could stand up under 'em."

Bearpaw would of most likely went on with a lot more descriptions of this lord and other strange things, but he was interrupted by a loud snort from the old Texan, who had managed to come to right in the middle of the blow.

"All right," he hollered, "I've heard all I want to hear, far as I'm concerned." He got up, threw his tin cup and plate in the round-up pan with a clatter, and walking away he was heard to say: "I've rode for the Y-Bench for many a year, but I feel it that starting tomorrow I'll be hitting for other countries."

No songs was heard during "cocktail" that evening; no mouth-organ was dug up out of the war-bag; instead we was all busy a-trying to figger out how the Y-Bench changed hands so quick, and without warning, the way it had. Just a few days before, the cow foreman had remarked that the outfit was figgering on leasing more range and running more stock, and now all of a sudden, and when all seemed to be going well, here comes the news that we had a new owner.

"I bet the reason of the sudden change is due to the big price that was offered," concludes Bearpaw. "I bet the price was so big no sane man would dare refuse it; but what gets me most is how a man such as this lord, what was raised on chopped feed and used to eating out of silver dishes, would want to come out here and get down to tin plates. From all I hear, he's going to run the outfit himself too."

"Most likely doing it for the sport that's in it," I chips in.

"He'll get plenty of that before he gets through," remarks Bearpaw, "specially if he sticks to them pancake saddles he's brought along."

We done a lot of joking on the subject and kept at it till along about second guard, but the next morning things looked pretty serious. Most of the boys was for quitting without even a look at the new owner and lord, though work was at its heaviest, and riders quitting at that time would sure put things on the kibosh for fair.

The old Texan was the first at the rope corral, and soon as the nighthawk had brought in the *remuda*, he dabbed his line on his private horses, led 'em to his saddle and bed and kept a-talking to himself as he fastened the rigging, his mumbling keeping up till a shadow on the ground told him somebody was near. A sour look was on his face as he turned to see Bearpaw, who was standing close by and sort of grinning at him a little.

"Now, Straight-up," says Bearpaw, (Straight-up was the nickname the old feller liked best; he liked to have it remembered that at one time he was the straight-up rider of that country, and on any kind of a horse), "what's the use of you blazing away

half-cocked, and quit this outfit cold like this? Why not sort of look forward to a little excitement and fun with this lord on the job? I'm thinking there's going to be lots of that when he comes, and that's what's making me stick around. Besides, you can never tell, and mebbe this lord is a daggone good feller."

The old cowboy was plumb against it at first and wouldn't even listen, but as Bearpaw talked on of the possibilities, he got so he'd lend an ear and soon he was just dubious. Then Bearpaw dug up his hole card and says:

"It sure wont hurt you to stick around just for a few days anyway; and if you do stay, I know I can get the other boys to stay too; besides, I'm thinking you'd miss a lot if you go now."

The Texan thought things over for quite a spell longer and finally he says:

"All right—if you fellers can stick it out, I guess I can too; I'll weather it out with the rest of you."

It was a couple of days later and near sundown when Bearpaw pointed at the sky-line to the east and hollered:

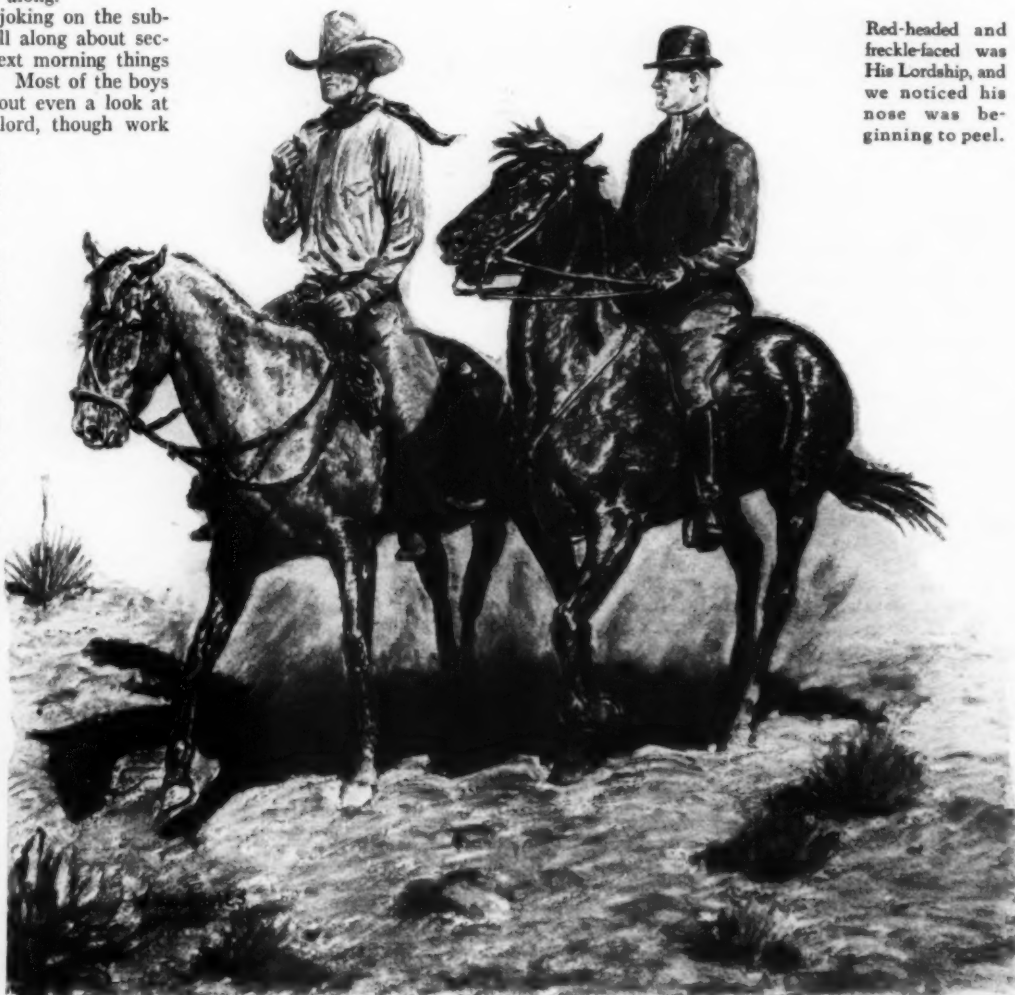
"All you cow-valets look up there on that ridge and see what's a-coming."

We all looked, and right away forgot what Bearpaw had called us as we took in the sight, for showing up plain against the sky-line we could see a loaded wagon coming, and 'longside it a few men on horseback.

"That's him and his outfit," says the old Texan. "It's our lord."

"Goshamighty," says Bearpaw, "it looks like he even brought a manicure with him by the size of that escort!"

The outfit came on, and pretty soon two riders started on ahead toward our camp. One of 'em was easy to make out; he



Red-headed and freckle-faced was His Lordship, and we noticed his nose was beginning to peel.



The old Texan's loop was spoiled by Bearpaw as it started to sail for them peaceful tents.

was our foreman; the other we figured to be none less than the new owner.

Red-headed and freckle-faced was His Lordship, and as he come close to be introduced to each of us boys, we noticed that his nose was already beginning to peel. His lower lip had started to crack too, but with all his red hair, freckles, peeled nose and cracked lip there was something about him that was still unruffled and shiny even if it was a little dusty, and that was his high-class riding-breeches and his flat-heeled riding-boots. The little nickel spurs was still a-hanging onto them boots, too, and set 'em off real stylish.

"Well, boys," we hear our foreman say, "I guess Bearpaw told you how the outfit had changed hands; this gentleman here is the new owner of the V-Bench. I hope that you'll all be as good men with him as you have been with me, and"—here he winked at us—"if a little storm comes up, don't quit too quick, but weather it out like we've always done and don't leave go of the critter till the critter hollers, 'Enough.'"

The introduction was no more than over when up comes the wagon all loaded down, and by the side of it two men as peeled as His Lordship, wearing the same kind of pants and boots, and setting on the exact same kind of flat saddles. Them we figured was the two that was to give us some pointers about riding.

"Seems like," Bearpaw says to me, "that all their saddles and boots and pants and all are made alike; I guess they all have the same taste."

A lot of opinions was scattered to the breeze on guard that night. Every time a rider would pass another while circling the bedded herd, there'd be a short stop, a remark passed, and the next time the riders met again on the opposite side of the herd that remark would be replaced by another.

The next morning came, and not any too early to suit us, because we wanted awful bad to have them stable valets show us how to mount a horse or something. There was quite a few horses we wanted them to use while they was eddicating us that way, and we was real anxious for all the learning they could hand us.

But the dignified silk tents with their air mattresses and folding cots was showing no sign of any life. It was near sunup too, and Bearpaw, being the straw boss, was near at the point of going to the tent and waking up His Lordship when the cook stopped him and headed him back.

"You daggone fool, don't you know it aint proper to bust in when nobility's asleep that way unless you're ordered to?"

Bearpaw was half-peevish when he waved a hand at us boys

to saddle up. "Well," he says, "I guess we can get along without him."

Them white silk tents was an awful temptation to all of us as we topped off our ponies and sort of let 'em perambulate around with heads free. A-shining to the sun the way they was, sort of invited initiation, and I think that was the way Bramah Long felt when he sort of hazed his bucking bronc' right about dead center for His Lordship's air mattress. All would of went well maybe, only the cook interfered again, and waving a long yellow slicker over his head, came to the nobility's rescue.

As it was, not a snore was disturbed as we rode on past for the day's first ride; even the old Texan's loop was spoiled by Bearpaw as it started to sail for a holt on one of them peaceful tents.

"Mighty daggone nice of you and the cook appointing yourselves as guardians," remarks the old cowboy to Bearpaw. "I thought you told me that we might have a little fun, and here you come along and spoil the best loop I ever spread."

The morning circle was made as usual and the same as if no new foreman had took holt. So far, nothing had come from him to disturb us in any way, and it looked like Bearpaw had, just natural-like, fell into being a cow foreman.

Some folks are just lucky that way, and climb up in the world without half trying.

We made our drive, caught fresh horses, and was working the herd we'd brought in, before we seen anything of His Lordship and the valets. We was all busy cutting out when we notices them a-coming like they was riding on the tail end of a funeral. They was riding the same horses they'd rode in from the home ranch, and to that the old Texan remarked:

"I guess they never change horses, where they come from."

"I don't think it's that, as much as the fact that they're a little leary of what they might draw out of that corral," says a cowboy near him. "Mebbe them thoroughbreds they're riding looks best to 'em, or safest."

His Lordship and his two men came up to within a hundred yards or so of the herd and from there watched the whole goings-on. They sat their horses stiff as statues and gave the feeling that if them horses started right sudden, they'd be left suspended in midair and still stiff. Hardly a word or a move of the hand was noticed, and as once in a while one of us would ride by 'em in heading off a bunch-quitting critter, not an eye would seem to notice or recognize any of us.

But them not seeming to see nor recognize us that way wasn't on account of their being stuck up or such-like; it was that they

was so interested in the whole goings-on in general that they were satisfied to just set on their horses and watch. Anyway, that's how we took it, for after the work was through and we all sashayed to the chuck-wagon, His Lordship and valets all seemed mighty sociable, and asked a lot of questions, most of which was sure hard to answer.

It was as we was cutting the meal short as usual and starting to go toward the corral that His Lordship stopped us and asked where we was going.

"On circle," answered Bearpaw.

"What do you mean by circle?"

"Ride."

"Why, you made one ride already," comes back His Lordship. "Besides, if you're going, I would like jolly well to go with you, but I am only half through with my meal."

"Oh, that's all right," says Bearpaw. "You can catch up with us."

We caught our horses and rode on out for the second circle, and it wasn't till we got sight of camp later that afternoon that we seen His Lordship again. Him and his two men showed up as we was working the herd, and the three of 'em watched us cut out, rope and brand with the same interest that'd been with 'em that forenoon.

"I tried to catch up with you as you told me," says His Lordship, who'd edged up to Bearpaw, "but it seemed like you men disappeared all at once and I couldn't find you anywhere. I'm afraid," he went on after a spell, "that I make a very poor foreman."

"You'll get on to that after a while," says Bearpaw; "it all takes time."

The work that had to be done kind of kept His Lordship from carrying on the conversation as he'd like to, and it wasn't till the evening meal was over, and the night horses caught, that he had a chance to get down to bedrock with us.

He started with a lot of questions which after they was answered seemed to set His Lordship to doing a lot of figgering. He figgered on for quite a spell, and when he finally spoke again, we already had a hunch of what the subject would be.

"When I bought this ranch," he starts in, "it was with intentions of changing and modernizing the handling of it to my ideas. Of course, it will take time to do all that, and I might need some advice, but if you men will stay with me while I experiment I promise that none of you will ever be sorry."

"Sure," interrupts Bearpaw, speaking for us all; "we'll stick—we'll enjoy it."

I don't think His Lordship got the meaning of that last; anyway he didn't seem nowhere disturbed as he went on:

"The first thing I'd like to do," he says, "is to make way with them heavy and awkward-looking saddles you men use in this country." He was looking straight at the camp-fire as he said that, and it's a good thing he was.

"I think your saddles are altogether unnecessary,"—the old Texan snorted, at that,—"too cumbersome, and I don't see why they need to be that. We play strenuous games of polo in our saddles, jump high fences, and do cross-country runs in steeplechases, and I think that as a whole we have a freedom to do things from our saddles that you men can't have in yours."

"I have brought some fine pigskin saddles with me for the purpose of you men using them, and tomorrow each one of you will be given one to use in the place of what you are now using."

"That's all very plain," says Bearpaw, a-trying hard to keep cool, "and being you're so frank in telling us about our saddles, I can be frank too and tell you before you start in modernizing things that them little stickers you brought along would be worse than riding bareback when there's real work and real riding to be done. I see you don't realize what our saddles mean to us; but anyway, I'll tell you what we'll agree to do. You got two men with you what savvies all about setting on them pancake saddles of yours, aint you?" asks Bearpaw.

"Yes," answers His Lordship.

"Well," goes on the cowboy, "tomorrow, we'll all go to work the same as usual. We'll ride our own cumbersome saddles, and you and your two top-notchers can ride your fly-weights. I take it you all have got riding down to a science and it'll be a fair deal. You and your men do what we do, and if after the day's work is over, you're still with us, we'll agree to use them little saddles of yours and love 'em to death. Is that O. K.?"

"Oh, yes," answers His Lordship, "that will be top-hole."

"And say," hollers the old Texan, "do we get riding-habits with them saddles of yours? It sure wouldn't look right to be riding on one of them things and have to wear chaps."

The break of the new day, and all the excitement that it promised, seemed awful slow coming. A faint streak had no more than showed in the east when us all was up and around. A while later we heard the *remuda* being brought in and corraled by the nighthawk, and we made our way to where the cook had the coffee boiling.

"Say, cook," says Bramah, "better wake up the nobility; it's high time for cowboys to be at work."

But the cook never let on he heard, and there was only one thing for us to do and that was to stick around and wait. There was many a bright remark brought on as the waiting kept up, and all of us was looking forward to the treat we knowed was coming.

The sun was just a-peeping over the ridge, and we should of been ten miles from camp by that time, but it wasn't till then that we begin to hear murmurs coming from the silk tents, and after what seemed an awful long while His Lordship and top hands finally showed themselves.

We'd long ago had our breakfast, so to rush things a bit, we started out for the corral and begin catching our horses.

"Now, boys," says Bearpaw, "don't all go to catching your worst horses for this event; just catch them that's in turn to be rode; we don't want to make it too hard on His Lordship."

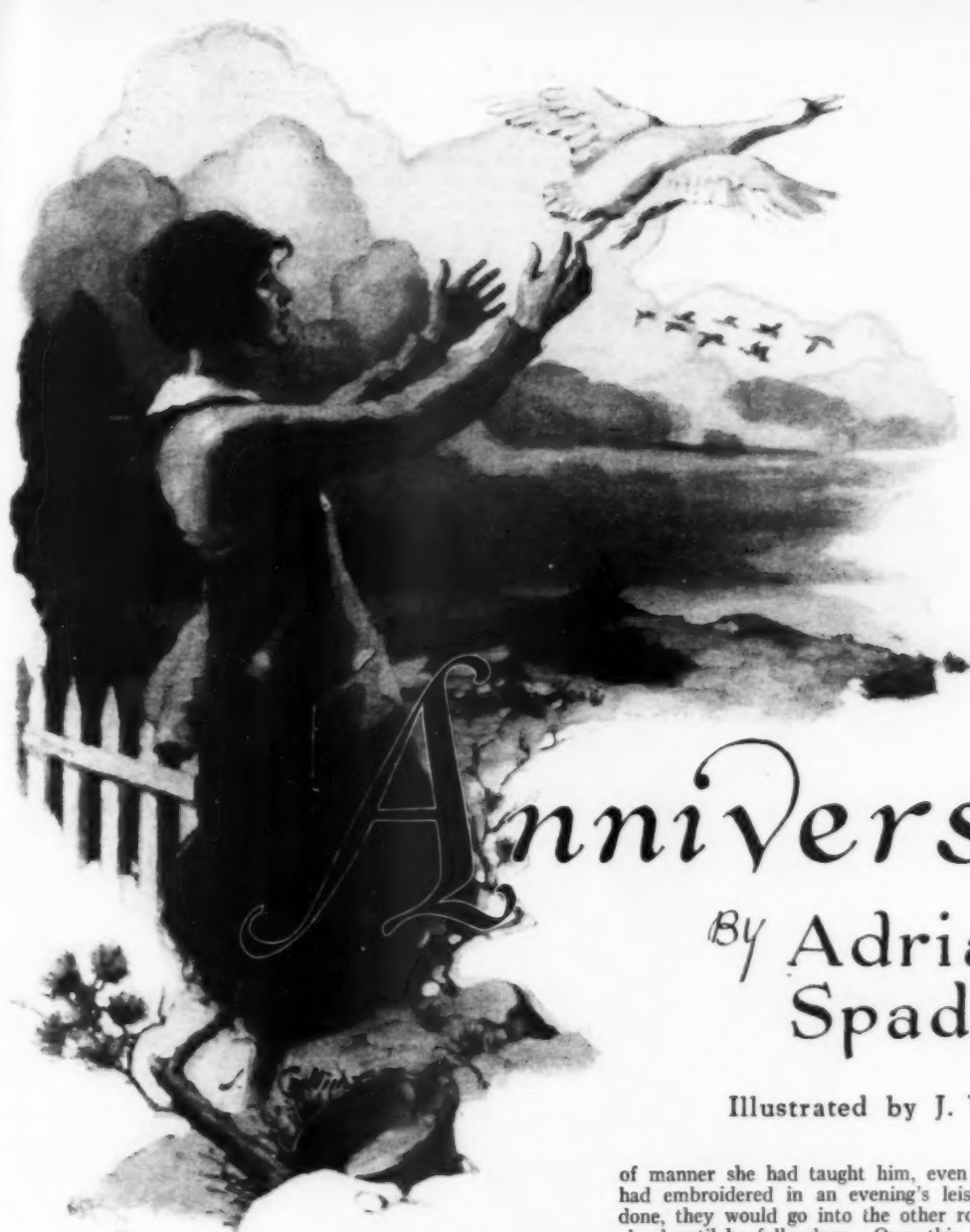
"And it happens that today is the day for Skyrocket," says Bramah, grinning.

Even though we took our time and done a lot of kidding while catching our horses, we still had to wait quite a spell for the nobility to join us. We wanted to give 'em a fair start, 'cause we felt they'd sure need it.

"I guess (Continued on page 107)"



His Lordship found himself near straddling that red steer.



In this brief tale Miss Spadoni presents a scene familiar to her from long experience: a hillside cabin on the California coast—where she herself lives in a place perhaps lovelier than any other on this continent. And, like the woman in the tale, she too once practiced her art in the canons of an Eastern city.

Anniversary

By Adriana Spadoni

Illustrated by J. W. Collins

"No, Max! You can't fly.
You've waited too long."

WHEN the woman was sure that the cake was cool enough, she spread the white icing, arranged eleven little pink candles about the edge, and set the cake in the center of the table laid for supper.

Alec would come earlier tonight, for already the November twilight, heavy with the first winter storm, lay thick upon the mountains and the sea. The great redwoods in the cañon below the clearing to which the tiny cabin clung, moaned in desire for the rain. The ocean roared against the high cliffs, frenzied at its release from the long calm.

In an hour Alec would come, riding down from the ridge trail far above the cabin. When he had turned his horse into the corral, he would come stamping into the kitchen, and instantly he would notice the cake.

"Eleven years, Gracie," he would say as he put his arms about her and kissed her.

Then they would have supper, finishing with the cake and black coffee in the little cups for which she had sent to the city. Throughout the meal Alec would be very gay, because this was their anniversary and because the good rain was come to assure fine pasture on the land burned over by last year's forest fires. In his happiness he would remember all the small niceties

of manner she had taught him, even to folding the napkin she had embroidered in an evening's leisure long ago. The dishes done, they would go into the other room, where she would read aloud until he fell asleep. Once this room had been bright with chintz curtains, woven rugs, her own sketches on the walls. Now the curtains were faded, the rugs frayed. The sketches had been packed away for years.

A gust of wind shook the cabin, and the woman shuddered.

Eleven years! Ten years since she had baked that first anniversary cake, since they had sat in the pretty room and talked of the trips they would take, the pictures she would teach him to love, the music they would hear, the interesting people they would meet in cities. She smiled bitterly, remembering how she had scorched her hands baking the cake, and how Alec had kissed them, marveling at their soft whiteness. Now her hands were grimed and cracked from trying to keep the cabin clean, carrying water from the spring to wash Alec's heavy corduroys.

"Eleven years is enough," she whispered grimly as she thrust another oak stick into the stove. "If I wait any longer, it will be too late."

Then, putting on the old sweater that hung behind the door, she took the pan of chicken-feed and went out.

Beyond the shelter of the cabin the wind struck at her as if to hurl her from its path. All the earth was alive, tossing restlessly as it waited the fulfillment of its need. She shivered and bent lower against the wind. Eleven years ago something within had answered to this fury of winter. Now she was afraid.

Struggling up the steep slope, she entered the chicken-yard where the hens huddled, dejected and miserable. Throwing them

half the food, she went on to the inclosure that held the geese. They came waddling toward her, stretching their long necks, making greedy noises in their throats. She loved her geese, for they too were penned on the mountain-side against their will. Even Alec had said she could never raise them. Geese needed water. But she had brought many buckets of clay soil from the cañon bottom, many pails of water from the spring, and made them a little pond. The fierce summer sun had dried the pool to caked mud, but still the geese had been grateful and had not died.

As she threw the food to them, they began gobbling it noisily—all but Maximilian, the great white gander, who continued to move nervously up and down along the fence, stopping every now and then to thrust his head through the pickets.

"Come, Max," she called, holding out the pan, his share of the food reserved temptingly. For since he was a little thing, he had come to her and let her stroke his head while he ate. But now he only turned his yellow-rimmed eyes distrustfully and went on, up and down along the fence.

"Here," she coaxed, following him. "The rain is surely coming. Soon there will be plenty of water."

But as she bent to touch him, he straightened the white arch of his neck and hissed.

She drew back, a slow flush mounting her wind-roughened cheek. She might insult every need of his nature with a little pool of caked mud, but his great white body was his own.

"Max," she whispered, "do you want me to kill you before I go? For I am going, Max. I haven't even a pool of dried mud any more."

He hissed again and thrust his

As she looked, a convulsive tremor shook him; his wings flapped; a thin strange noise came from his throat. Dropping the pan, she ran to him. But as if the clatter of the pan on the rock were a signal, he rose unsteadily, his yellow feet clawing the emptiness for support.

"No! No, Max! No! You can't fly. You've waited too long."

But he moved on, up, his feeble wings beating the air furiously.

"Max!"

Her groping hands closed on nothing as, with a triumphant honk, wabbling like a drunkard, he passed over her. Her arms dropped. She stood staring after him.

Out, out he went, more smoothly now, his yellow feet drawn close to his white body, his wings cleaving the air in the old forgotten rhythm. Slowly he moved away, out across the cliffs,

above the lashing surf. There he hung, honking pitifully, turning this way and that, seeking the wild brothers who had gone on and left him. Then, with a loud cry, he wheeled his bulk into the wind and began pursuit.

Twenty yards, thirty, he glided—wavered, and with a scream of terror, dropped, straight as a plummet, into the sea.

Stumbling, slipping on the loose rocks, the woman ran down, down to the tiny beach far below. As she reached it, a towering wave reared high, smashed on the cliff and flung the broken body of Max at her feet.

Flying spray drenched her; rain beat upon her; and still



"Max—is dead," she whispered. "He tried—to fly away—but he couldn't."

narrow head through the pickets. She threw the remaining food to the others and watched them struggling against one another for it.

"Fools! You've all forgotten, except Max. He will never forget."

Suddenly the first drops of rain fell, big slow drops as if impeded by their own eagerness.

"There, Max. I didn't lie to you. It has come." She turned to him eagerly, but he was standing now, his white neck raised column-wise to the sky. Black in the gray air, a band of wild geese came flying south before the storm—flying close in, and low, honking their short sharp cry.

she knelt, the broken body in her arms. In the narrow gorge of the cañon the little stream, mad with its new freedom, roared tiny challenge to the storm. A dead tree crashed to earth. The ocean flung

itself at the land in a passion of released desire. But the great white bird lay cold and limp within her hold.

At last she rose, a dazed look in her eyes, and gripping the wet body closer, began climbing the bluff.

On the first wide ledge above the sea she stopped, panting. High on the mountain, the kitchen window of the cabin glowed dimly through the rain. Alec must have come home. He was there waiting in the warm kitchen. Supper was ready on the stove, the cake with the unlit candles on the table. She passed her hand wearily across her eyes.

Now the dark cabin front broke in a wider oblong of yellow light. Alec must have opened the door. He must be looking for her. She was always there when Alec came. But tonight—

The high sweet note of the kelp-horn came, weak and distant on the wind. Alec was calling her. He wanted her. He loved her so. Alec, with his kind, slow smile, his clumsy, gentle touch.

Suddenly her knees trembled. The heavy weight that had pressed upon her for days, weeks, months, lifted as if torn from

How easy it is to serve the finest tomato soup!

IT IS A well-known fact that the blending of tomato soup to suit exactly the tastes of many different people is a task that challenges the highest skill of the soup chef.

Haven't you had this experience at some time or other? A plate of tomato soup has been set before you. You looked forward to real enjoyment of its refreshing flavor. You took the first spoonful and it tasted somewhat "flat". Something was missing.

Why? Where did your sense of taste get its "education" in tomato soup? The tomato soup you serve regularly at home, the tomato soup which is most likely to be served to you when you are entertained—that has taught your appetite the true blend. Anything less is bound to be a disappointment.

And this blend is a condensed tomato soup—Campbell's. By blending it from an exclusive recipe that produces always the same uniform richness of flavor, and by condensing it so that it is available everywhere to the public in such convenient form, Campbell's lessen the housewife's work in the kitchen and offer even to the humblest table in the land, tomato soup as fine as it can be made.

So people everywhere have learned the important lesson of Soup. The sheer enjoyment of its delicious flavor. The healthfulness and invigoration which are

derived from it. Its tonic and stimulating effect upon the appetite. More and more people every day are realizing that this hot, liquid food called soup, encourages the flow of the digestive juices and increases the benefit from all the food we eat.

Tomato is an ideal soup—appropriate for formal occasions, a wonderful standby for the regular family menus, splendid for the children, and unfailing in its invitation to the appetite. And housewives use Campbell's Tomato Soup for a great variety of their dishes to give extra zest and flavor.

Try it as a sauce for meats, fish, sausage and salads and for added tastiness in spaghetti, rice, eggs or vegetables. Delicious mixed with roast beef gravy. Of course, it makes the most tempting Cream of Tomato Soup!



12 cents a can

WITH THE MEAL OR AS A MEAL SOUP BELONGS IN THE DAILY DIET!

her by the wind. With the cry of a sleeper waking from an evil dream, she raised the body of the dead goose high and flung it from her into the night.

"Alec!" she called feebly. "Alec! I'm coming! Alec!"

But the rain drowned the words on her lips, and the cabin door closed.

Snatching at the rocks, uprooting the bushes to which she clung, she struggled frantically on.

Just as she reached the cabin, the door opened, and Alec came out in high rubber boots and poncho.

"Thank God!" he cried, and drew her into the warm kitchen. "I was going out to look for you. I was so frightened, Gracie. Where were you, sweetheart?"

Sobbing, she clung to him.

"What is it, dearest? Tell me!" he plead-

ed, holding her tighter, stroking the wet hair with his gentle clumsy touch.

"Max—is dead," she whispered. "Oh, Alec, Max is dead. He tried—to fly away—but—he couldn't—and he fell into the sea."

"Poor Max! Poor old Max!" Alec comforted as if she were a little girl. "But don't cry, darling. We'll get another one. We'll—"

"No! No! I don't want another. And I'm glad he's dead. I'm glad, glad. We—we loved him—and he tried to go away and leave us."

Alec drew her closer. "All right, honey, just as you say. I understand."

But, above the head pressed upon his breast, his soft dark eyes were puzzled. Gracie had loved Max. And now she was glad that Max was dead!

Why were there so many things he did not understand, although he loved her so? So much, much more than he had years ago when, riding the coast trail for lost cattle, he had come upon her, a girl from the city who hoped one day to become an artist—painting the sea.

Would there always be something he did not understand in spite of his love?

Tenderly he held her until the sobs ceased. Then he drew off the sodden sweater and shoes, brought slippers and another dress. When his awkward hands had fastened it, she crept back into his arms again. He held her close, and smiling, pointed to the cake.

"Every year it's prettier than the last, Gracie. I like the pink candles best of all."

And he kissed her eleven times. Eleven slow, deep kisses, reverent with passion.

THE INQUIRING REPORTER

(Continued from page 42)

easily have passed for a successful financier—a financier, say, who had made a fortune by buying things when others were wild to sell them, and selling them again when others were crazy to buy.

"Me," said he, "I saved every cent I could for over ten years, and then like a so-and-so fool, I endorsed a note. *Bloo-ee!* After that, you bet your sweet life I spend my money as fast as I make it; and that way—see?—I always make sure that nobody spends it for me."

The next had the burning eyes of an ascetic, his face marked here and there with the brand of the Demon Rum.

"You go to Where-is-it!" he replied with a gasp. "You touch me on the shoulder again like that, and see what happens to you!"

Thus Mell, working his way down the line, until he was sure that he had got his column.

"Now if I could only find something extra good to end up with," he told himself, "something to make a climax that would sell the story sure."

He looked down the rows of benches, the lights of the park and the moon both helping him; and over near the railing he thought he saw the form of a woman, sitting motionless as a statue and half concealed by the shadow of a bush.

"If that's a girl," thought Mell, his breath quickening, "—and if she would only tell her story!"

Yes—it was a girl, covered with a cape and a black scarf over her head; and as Mell approached her, she looked up at him from under the scarf, and all that he could see at first were large, dark eyes.

"I beg your pardon—" began Mell, his voice shaking a little.

"You go on about your business," she sharply told him, "or I'll call the cop. He's just behind the bushes, there, and he knows me, too."

"I beg your pardon," said Mell again, speaking hurriedly, instinct telling him that this was the climax of his story, "but I'm a reporter on the New York *Star*, and I'm getting a number of hard-luck stories; and it seems to me that you might be able to tell a good one, why you're in the park tonight, and all that—if you would care to oblige me to that extent."

She looked at him, raising her chin a little farther from the shadow of her scarf; and although she was almost grotesquely made up, with blue around her eyes and purple on her cheeks, Mell noted with growing surprise how young she was.

"No sir, nothing much but a kid," he told himself, and presently added, with a touch

of uneasiness: "Oh, boy—and hasn't she got a temper!"

Indeed he wouldn't have been surprised if she had snatched herself up from the bench, and had marched away with her head in the air; but instead, her frowning look gradually softened into thoughtfulness.

"You say you're a reporter?" she asked.

"Well—a kind of a reporter," said Mell. "If the editor likes my story, you see, he'll buy it."

"And you want something to put in the paper? Is that it?"

"If I can get something," said Mell, humbly enough.

"And you're sure you're not connected with the cops or anything like that?"

"Do I look as if I was?"

She gave him a slow, appraising look, and again she was quiet; but as he watched her, amateur though he was, Mell knew again that if he could ever get the story which was shadowed on her face, he would not have to seek any further for his climax.

"All right," she suddenly said, and pointed through the iron railings. "There's a store over there with a bear in the window, right next to that hotel. And if you want a story for your paper tonight, you watch that store."

She arose then, and gathered her cape around her for departure.

"And whatever you do," she whispered, just before she started off, her lips surprisingly close to his ear, "keep your eye on the bear!"

She passed him then, as though with unseeing eyes, and a moment later had vanished around the bush.

"Good Lord," breathed Mell, making a half-unconscious motion as though to follow her, "a bear— Was she kidding me, after all?"

He rounded the bush, but could see nothing of her; and as his eyes roved over the park, he caught sight of the bulk of an apartment hotel rising across the street.

"That's probably the place with the store next door," he thought to himself, "—the store with the bear in the window. Stringing me now, I'm sure she was. . . . But anyhow," he added with a philosophical shrug of his shoulders, "whether she was kidding or not, it won't take long to see."

THE Hotel Tovar faced the park—this one of its fondest boasts; and Mell was able to see it sufficiently well through the wrought-iron rails which divided the grass from the sidewalk; limestone front, limestone pillars, illuminated entrance and blue-uniformed hall-man. A taxi had stopped in front with two passengers and a trunk; and for a time they partly hid the store next

door; but when the taxi moved on, Mell found himself looking at the shop of a fashionable furrier—whose Russian name of Rapiëff, and whose trademark of a polar bear, were known wherever sables were the subject of understanding discussion. Above the window Mell could just read the word "*Rapiëff*," and if he had looked at the upper stories he might have made out the legend "Wholesale and Retail;" but from the moment when the taxi had rolled away, his eyes had been fixed, like two round lamps, upon the street window—for there, the only item on display, was Rapiëff's trademark: a polar bear standing on its hind legs, one of its front paws raised in a threatening attitude.

"That's the place, all right," thought Mell. "At least, she hasn't fooled me this far."

HE pulled himself farther in among the shrubbery which lined the railings, and stared at the bear so long and so hard that his eyes began to ache and he was glad to look away at something else.

"Darned fool!" he told himself. "She was stringing me—just the way a girl like that would."

But he didn't say this with any conviction; for the more he had thought of the girl in the cape, the more certain he had felt that, whatever else she might be, she had certainly been sincere enough when she had spoken to him.

An express truck, stopping across the street, recalled his attention; and half a dozen trunks were rattled out on the sidewalk, each bearing the labels of ocean travel—"Wanted"—"Wanted"—"Not Wanted." Another taxi drove up then and pulled to the sidewalk in front of the truck, the two of them together nearly hiding Rapiëff's store window from Mell's line of vision. Over the hood of the truck he could see a few feet of plate glass, the bear standing behind it, his paw raised ready to cuff.

"Funny, the truck doesn't move on," thought Mell, not liking it, because it hid the store. "And the taxi, too." But then the explanation came to him. "Somebody off a ship that just came in—and he's either looking at rooms, or the hotel's full and he's phoning around to see where else he can get in, meanwhile keeping the truck and the taxi, so they can take him wherever he wants to go."

He looked again at the bear—looked and blinked and looked again—for just at the moment when his eyes fell on it, he could have sworn that the bear was moving—that it had been glancing over its shoulder into the back of the store and had swiftly turned to face the street again.

"Oh, damn it!" Mell grieved to himself.

AT THE MOUNT ROYAL in Montreal

166 Women Guests

tell why they find this "a perfect soap for the skin"

WINTER SPORTS at Mount Royal—

A crystal world—diamond-bright air—fields of snow that sparkle with a million tiny flames—

Men and women in love with life, as they skate, ski, toboggan against the cold, warm in their glistening furs . . .

They go from tropical seas to twenty degrees of frost, these pleasure-loving women of the leisure class—yet manage to achieve a skin always smooth, soft, flawless in texture.

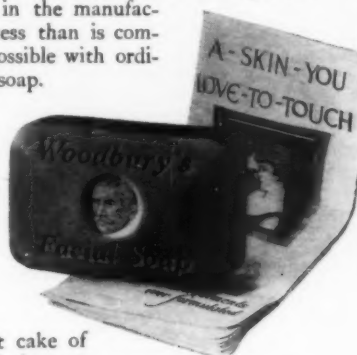
How do they do it? What soap do they find, pure enough and fine enough to keep their skin in perfect condition summer and winter?

We asked 270 women guests at beautiful Mount Royal in Montreal what soap they use for the care of their skin.

166 answered, "*Woodbury's Facial Soap!*"

"*Soothing—delightful—refreshing,*" they said. "*The only soap that does not irritate my skin.*" "*It is all that a soap should be.*"—"*A perfect soap!*"

A SKIN SPECIALIST worked out the formula by which Woodbury's Facial Soap is made. This formula not only calls for the purest and finest ingredients; it also demands greater refinement in the manufacturing process than is commercially possible with ordinary toilet soap.



A 25-cent cake of Woodbury's lasts a month or six weeks. Around each cake is wrapped a booklet of famous skin treatments for overcoming common skin defects.

Within a week or ten days after beginning to use Woodbury's, you will notice an improvement in your complexion. Get a cake today—begin tonight the treatment your skin needs!

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"Wrapped in furs, against the glittering background of winter—men and women in love with life . . ."

Your Woodbury Treatment for ten days + Now—the new large-size trial set

THE ANDREW JERGENS CO.
1701 Alfred St., Cincinnati, Ohio

For the enclosed 10c please send me the large-size trial cake of Woodbury's Facial Soap, the Cold Cream, Facial Cream and Powder, and the booklet, "A Skin! You Love to Touch." If you live in Canada, address The Andrew Jergens Co., Limited, 1701 Sherbrooke Street, Perth, Ont.

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"And she told me to keep my eye on it, too! . . . Did it move? . . . Good Lord, no; how could it move? A stuffed bear like that!"

NEVERTHELESS after a few minutes' strained scrutiny in which the bear was steady enough to suit the most fastidious observer, Mell suddenly scrambled backward out of the shrubbery, and hurrying to one of the gates of the park, he crossed the street and sauntered up to Rapiëff's store. There, trying to give the impression of a dawdler with nothing but time on his hands, he stopped and yawned and looked at Rapiëff's trademark.

"Stuffed, all right," he told himself. "Dust on its tongue."

Uneasily, then, he became increasingly conscious that the bear seemed to be looking at him with malevolent eyes—one of which had a slight cast in it, as though the taxidermist hadn't centered it quite right. The bear's nose, too, Mell noticed, was slightly chipped on one side.

"Sure, it's stuffed," he told himself again. But for all that, he couldn't shake off the feeling that the bear was watching him with a distinct feeling of peevishness, and would like nothing better than to bring that threatening lifted paw right down on some one's head.

"One thing sure," thought Mell: "whether he moved before or not, he's not going to move any more while I stand here looking at him."

He dawdled off then and was quickly back at his observation post among the shrubs, arriving there in time to see the six lordly trunks being loaded back upon the express truck.

"That's funny, too," thought Mell. "They weren't on the sidewalk when I was over there—or if they were, I didn't notice them."

From under the body of the taxi he caught a glimpse of a sidewalk elevator being closed; and a moment later the truck rolled off, silently and powerfully, quickly gathering speed and soon disappearing in the iron forests of Sixth Avenue.

"Great Scott!" gasped Mell, his eyes again attracted by a movement across the street.

No—there wasn't the least shadow of doubt about it this time: the bear was moving, not stiffly, not rigidly, as a stuffed bear should, but with a heavy grace that held Mell spellbound. Yes, over the low railing that guarded the window platform clambered the bear, and disappeared into the store beyond, only to appear a few moments later out on the deserted sidewalk, where it lumbered up into the taxi, the taxi immediately moving off with a roar of exhaust, and vanishing like the truck under the elevated pillars of Sixth Avenue. . . .

Next day all the papers had the same headlines, "Million Dollar Fur Robbery" or "Million Dollar Fur Haul Baffles Police," according to whether they had two or three lines to do it in. And although the Million Dollars was palpably headline writer's license, at least there was no mistake about the length of the list of sables which M. Rapiëff gave to the insurance company that morning, and there was no mistake about

the fact that a watchman had been shot and taken to Roosevelt Hospital.

"Sounds like an inside job to me, nevertheless," said the worldly Charles Peter Hooper to Mell, when that Inquiring Reporter breathlessly told what he had seen the night before, "all except the bear. You're sure you didn't imagine the bear?"

"No sir!" exclaimed Mell. "I saw him just as plain—saw him cross the sidewalk, and get in the taxi, and everything."

"Had you been looking at him long before he began to move?"

"Yes sir; but honestly, Mr. Hooper, he came right out of the store and got into the cab. I saw him just as plain as I see you now. And anyhow, even if I imagined the bear, you don't suppose that I imagined the girl too, do you?"

"Son," said Charles Peter after a long, hypnotic stare, "darned if I don't believe you! And of course, if I believe you, it was a man in a bear-skin, standing there in the window to make sure the coast was clear while they were rifling the store behind him."

"Yes sir!" eagerly nodded Mell. "I got as far as that!"

"Bright boy! And now I'll tell you what I'm going to do. I'm going to give you twelve hours' start before I turn the pack loose after that bear. Darned if I don't wish I was out myself doing leg-work again!" he exclaimed, sniffing the battle from afar. "But anyhow, I'll help you all I can."

"Thank you very much, Mr. Hooper."

"FIRST place," continued Charles Peter, "the bear, of course, is the key to the whole business. Plenty of trucks in the city. Plenty of taxis. But it seems to me there are darned few men who can handle themselves in a bear-skin—and darned few empty bear-skins, either, that a man could get his arms and legs in. So there's our line; do you see it now?"

"Yes sir."

"Good! And now I'll tell you how we'll work it. That wise-looking, baldheaded office-boy over near the telephone booths—he'll give you a list of the masquerade outfitters in town; and first of all, you'll telephone them, and see if there were any bear costumes out last night. After that you'll call up the vaudeville agents, and see if they can feed you any facts about bear-skin performers. And then you'd better see the great Truman Lamont. You have heard, of course, of the great Truman Lamont?"

"No sir, I'm afraid I haven't, Mr. Hooper."

"Strange! The great Truman has a special little coop over in the corner there, and writes dramatic reviews which are better than most of the shows he sees. For doesn't the great Truman admit as much himself? I'll say he does! And if after all this fishing, you still have nothing but pieces of worm on your hook, you had better ask those talented young gentlemen on the city desk if they know of any bear acts in town, spelling it properly, mark you—*b-e-a-r*—or they may tell you something wrong."

Mell began to get the thrill of it then—but after nearly two hours' steady telephoning, he didn't think so much of it. Not only that, but he had drawn blanks from

the masquerade outfitters and the vaudeville agents, and even the great Truman Lamont had been unable to help him.

"Of course there may be something of the kind going on in vaudeville," the latter had said, blowing down the stem of his pipe with a weary air, "but you're liable to find most anything there—even entertainment."

But just when everything seemed darkest, one of the talented young gentlemen at the city desk came through big.

"Bear act? *B-e-a-r*? Wait a minute, now," he said. "Sure—I've got it, now. There's a bear act up on the Tip-Top Roof, at the cabaret performance. At least, there was last week," he added. "Have you a cigarette?"

Mell relayed this to Charles Peter, who was busy putting "OK CPH" on a bunch of proofs.

"All right," said Charles without looking up. "You chase yourself up there tonight. You think you'd know that bear-skin again if you saw it?"

"Yes sir. He had a chip off his nose."

"Smart boy! All right, now; what else do you want?"

"Oh, Mr. Hooper—"

"Yes?"

"Do you think I'll have to spend any money tonight, up there on the Tip-Top Roof?"

"Sure you will. What else do you think they are doing business for?" He was still at the proofs, sprawling his initials with a prodigious left-handed flourish of which he was very proud, and which he always hoped was being observed by the public.

"Oh, Mr. Hooper—"

"Yes, yes?"

"I wonder if you liked that story about the Inquiring Reporter—the one I turned in this morning."

"Not so rotten. Why?"

"Because, you see, I'm broke again; and if I shall have to spend any money tonight—"

Charles Peter made out an order for eight dollars—grudgingly, writing his name small, as though it hurt him: a born editor, if ever there was one.

"Now, remember," said he, "if you find out anything there this evening, you're to call me up—not the office, remember—nor the old man—nor anyone else but me—"

He wrote his telephone-number on the margin of one of the proofs which he had not yet read, and was tearing it off when something on the galley sheet evidently caught his eye, for first he stopped tearing, and then he whistled.

"Rapiëff's just come across with an offer of ten thousand dollars' reward," he said, tearing off the number. "The insurance company must have got under his hide. Remember now, till half-past eight: and then the pack's turned loose."

THERE was one thing sure about the Tip-Top Roof: it certainly had atmosphere. You left the garish lights of Broadway, its battered taxis and clanging trolleys, its ways and its means, its sheep and its shoats, and you walked along a hallway to where a silently moving elevator wafted you aloft. And when you reached the end of your journey and stepped out of the chariot, it might have been another world that you entered.

The first effect was impressionistic—impressions of shaded lights and great distances, trellised panels covered with roses, silently moving waiters with expressions like princes of the blood and evening clothes like tailors' visions, an oblong dancing floor shimmering in purple moonlight as though it were a lake lined by groves of tables, each occupied by a glorious female and a more or less glorious male, though generally less than more. Somewhere, too, in the distance, M. L. caught glimpses of rocks and fen, of a wa-

Jesse Lynch Williams

This famous dramatist and short-story writer has written a singularly impressive story of a man and his son, "A Man's Castle," for the next issue of this magazine. It is the sort of story that every man—and every woman too—will take to heart and remember always.



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terfall continually changing color and taking upon itself the tints of a bunch of sweet peas: lavender, jade, raspberry jam, pistachio, mauve. There was a stage, too, at one end of the dancing floor, with a curtain of amber velvet, and a proscenium arch like the pillars and cornice of a Greek temple.

"Table engaged, sir?" murmured one of the waiters, slipping forward to Mell and looking as though he were trying to hide amusement.

"No," Mell whispered back, and nearly found himself saying, "No, sir." "Do you have to engage them?" he asked.

"It's customary—yes," nodded the Beau Brummel, no longer trying to hide it.

"Then I'd like to engage one," said Mell, "somewhere where I can see the stage pretty close."

With a negligent gesture, the child of much practice, Beau looked at the palm of his own left hand, and negligently moved this thumb across his fingers.

"I have a good one for *one*," he said, with an indescribable accent upon the numeral, "and a better one yet for *two*."

There were times, at least, when Mell didn't need the kick of a mule to start him with the hiccoughs. He fished two dollars from his waistcoat pocket and was straightway led, blushing more than a little, to a side-table in the second row, snugly enshrouded in front of the orchestra, so that behind him he had the bass saxophone listening at his ear like a deaf man's trumpet, and at the ringside table in front of him he had the prodigal back of a lady in evening dress—a charming lady with shingled hair and a look of aristocracy, yet human like all the rest of us, in that now and then, when the lights were dimmed, she gently rubbed her shoulders against the uprights of her chair.

HARDLY had Mell seated himself when the orchestra burst out jazzing, and for a time he sat there apparently watching the dancers, the bass saxophone gurgling syncopated oom-pahs in his ear. And bit by bit the music fitted into Mell's thoughts, so that presently the saxophone seemed to be gurgling over and over, "Ten-thousand-dollars-larrrrs! Ten-thousand-dollars-larrrrs!"

"Of course I'll never get it," thought Mell. "Things like that don't happen any more—at least, to me, they don't."

But still the bass saxophone gurgled its diapason in his ear. "Ten-thousand-dollars-larrrrs! Ten-thousand-dollars-larrrrs!"

"Wouldn't it be great, though!" he more dreamily continued. "I could open an office, a real accounting office, and show New York whether I was a crook or not." But deep in his heart he knew he never would. His year "down south" was too great a handicap for that. Besides, he had never really liked figures, and was only a second-rate bookkeeper at best. He had stumbled into bookkeeping the way too many men stumble into their life's vocations. He had kept the books at Art Tillinghast's store back home, and when he went to New York to make

his name in the world, he had naturally gravitated into the only thing he knew. But deep in his heart he knew what he liked the best, now that he had had his fill of making his name in the world: The scent of hay falling before the chatter of trembling knives, orioles in an elm tree, the evening jog to the post office along the Green Hollow Road, the weekly trading trip to Norwich, the whirr of pheasants down by the Quinebaug, the sparkle of trout in Lathrop's brook, a line of stanchions filled with soft-eyed Ayrshires, an occasional visit to the Gun Club in Plainfield.

The dancing, he noticed at last, had stopped, the dancers returning to their tables; and the lights, except those around the proscenium arch, were being dimmed. Suddenly a spot-light shot its rays across the floor and scored a circle on the amber velvet.

"Good!" thought Mell, his scalp tightening a little. "The show's beginning."

A waiter slithered up to him—rather sad, and rather fat—a waiter, perhaps, who, like unto Mell, had come to New York to make his name in the world.

"Regular dinner, sir?" he asked.

"Guess so," said Mell, and dropping his voice to a whisper: "How much is it?"

"Two-fifty a plate."

Mell did a sum in mental arithmetic—first addition and then subtraction. "All right," he said, when he arrived at the answer, "I guess I'll have one of those."

"Regular dinner; yes sir."

MELL wanted the waiter to clear away, for the stage was filling with singing girls, and for reasons of his own, he didn't want to miss any of it. But still the waiter hovered around, buzzing like a fat old bumblebee who only knew how to buzz one song, and that a sad one.

"Soup, sir," he began. "Consommé or cream of celery?"

"Cream of celery," said Mell, thinking it sounded more filling.

"Yes sir. And what fish will you have, sir—brook trout or blue-fish?"

"Brook trout! Brook trout!"

"Brook trout; yes sir."

He went away at last. The girls, still singing, were marching off down the stage and onto the dancing floor—each evidently representing a musical instrument. The first one, for instance, wore the front and back panels of a bull fiddle. The second one served as the front frame of a harp. The third was a French horn, the fourth a cello. Mell smiled at the fancy, but when the fifth girl came marching down the steps that led from the stage, framed in the three sides of an enormous triangle, his smile died away and he almost stopped breathing; for this girl in the triangle who was taking up a position on the dancing floor not far from the lady with the prodigal back, this girl with the dark eyes who was singing something in which "Tingle-tingle-tingle" rhymed with "Jingle-jingle-jingle"—was she? Was she?

Her eyes turned on him, and there was no doubt in his mind after that. She was the girl to whom he had spoken in the park the night before—the girl who had told him to watch Rapieff's store if he wanted a good story for his paper.

"GETTING warm, all right," thought Mell in growing excitement. "I wonder if she recognized me just now when she looked over here."

Upon reflection, he decided that she hadn't. For one thing, he was in shadow and hatless, his glass of water raised to his lips at the moment when she had looked; and for another thing, she had given no sign, but had kept on singing away. Her song at an end, she was smiling now at the lady with the wealth of back—a mournful little smile,

Mell thought, and with more than a hint of tragedy somewhere in it. Old Bumblebee came buzzing up with the cream of celery, and the first thing he did was to get between Mell's table and the floor.

"Would you like something to drink, sir?" he asked. "We have some very fine fruit lemonade—a Tip-Top specialty—that I can highly recommend."

"All right," said Mell shortly, as much to get him out of the way as anything else.

"A quart, sir?"

"All right, as long as you bring it quick."

"A quart, sir. Very well, sir. And after the fish—"

IN short, by the time he had gone, the Triangle girl had gone too, and the living orchestra, now grouped in the center of the floor, was playing "Marcheta" upon themselves, while another girl, starred as the Spirit of Song, was working herself up into melodic frenzy which was soon to find its climax in her last high note. But Mell had neither eyes nor ears for melodic frenzy, watching and listening all the time for the Triangle, and gradually getting it borne into his consciousness that the Triangle's legs were sunburned, and so were her arms, and that somehow she was different from the other girls—had a manner that was all her own, and kept her eyes on the waterfall as though she loved to watch it.

"I'll bet she likes the outdoors too," he told himself, when the number was finished at last. "Probably got that tan in swimming. Hello—what now?"

It was two sisters doing a character dance, and that was followed by a ballet, "Moonlight," which in turn gave place to a comic song and chorus, "When Gramper Learned to Play the Clarinet." Gramper duly quacked himself into oblivion, and a pair of demon dancers appeared—the lady taking desperate chances of having her neck broken at every step, but always preserving inviolate the shyness of her smile. By that time, Mell's fruit lemonade appeared—such an imposing spectacle with its slices of pineapple and orange and lemon, with its mint and maraschino cherries, with its raspberries and blocks of ice, that the moment he saw it, he began doing mental arithmetic again, arriving each time at an answer that made him sweat.

"If it only costs a dollar, I can get through," he thought. "But if it costs any more than that—"

He was interrupted by a total extinction of the lights, followed by an electrical snow-storm—large white flakes falling wherever he looked, down the walls, down the pillars, even down the lady's back in front of him. Suddenly a deep roar sounded, and the next moment Mell's scalp tightened for the second time that night, for down on the floor, attentively followed by the spotlight, was a polar bear, making its lumbering way to one of the tables across the room and there doing a comedy love-scene to a red-faced woman in pale green silk.

"That's him—I'll bet that's him!" thought Mell, half rising—grammar long ago cast to the winds. "That's just the way he walked across the sidewalk!"

"Oh, isn't he lovely!" laughed the lady in front of him. "I do hope he'll come over here!"

"So do I!" thought Mell with all his heart. "One thing sure, if he doesn't, I'm going over there!"

But he didn't have to do that. The bear had turned and was approaching, walking slowly along the tables as though in search of some one he knew. He came to a stop just far enough away so that Mell couldn't see what he wanted to see, but that Inquiring Reporter was not to be denied. Taking advantage of the darkness, Mell arose and cautiously threaded his way among the tables to where the bear was acting *Romeo*

Frederick O'Brien

You remember his famous books on the Isles of Allure, no doubt—"White Shadows in the South Seas," and others. Well, he's turned to short-story writing, and quite the best he's done so far will be published in an early issue of this magazine under the title—

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again; and just before the lights flashed on, he saw the two things that he had hoped to see: that the bear had a cast in one of its eyes, and a chip off the side of its nose.

ON the dancing floor a bus-boy was carrying a sign: "Ten Minutes' Intermission. You Dance While the Artists Rest."

"Does the bear come out again?" Mell asked his waiter, wondering if they would try to hold him if he couldn't pay his bill.

"Yes sir, I think he does. As a crocodile next time. Just a moment, sir, and I'll get you a program."

He returned at the end of a long minute, Mell nearly crazy at the delay. But, yes, there it was. The concluding number of Part One was:

The Bear....Mr. Eddie Dowell
And just before the finale of Part Two:

The Alligator....Mr. Eddie Dowell.

Mell was about to drop the program when a red-inked paragraph caught his eye: "A covert charge of two dollars per person will be added to each bill to help defray the expenses of our inimitable cabaret performance."

"God help me," thought Mell, rising somewhat unsteadily, "if Mr. Hooper isn't in."

But Charles Peter might have been sitting with his phone at his elbow, so quickly he answered the call.

"Mr. Hooper?" asked Mell, carefully closing the door of the booth and lowering his voice.

"Yes, yes. I hear you."

"This is Mell Dawley—you know—the Inquiring Reporter."

"Yes, yes; I hear you. Shoot."

"I—I've found the bear, Mr. Hooper."

"You what?"

"I say I've found the bear—the one who was in the window last night."

"The devil you have! Where is he? Can you hold him awhile?"

"Yes sir. He's up here at the Tip-Top Roof, and he's going to appear again in another act, maybe in fifteen or twenty minutes."

"Where are you phoning from?"

"From the Roof."

"Pay station?"

"Yes sir."

"Slot machine?"

"Yes sir."

"Good! Probably nobody listening, then. All right; I'll be up there in less than ten minutes with a couple of genial assistants. You be waiting at the elevator for us, will you? All right, son. Good-by."

Mell hung up the receiver with a sigh of relief, and stepping out of the booth, he found himself looking straight into the eyes of the Triangle girl—the Triangle girl, who had evidently been waiting in the next compartment for him, and whose breath was coming quick and fast as though she had been running a race.

She had her cape around her—the same cape which she had worn the night before in the park; and although her cheeks and lips still had the coloring of a doll's, there was nothing doll-like in the dark depths of her eyes.

"Hello," said Mell, stammering a little.

Her reply—delivered after a pause in which she never took her eyes off him, in a look more brooding and wistful than a stare—sounded inconsequential.

"Want to see something?" she asked.

For one fleeting moment he suspected a trap—a deserted corridor, perhaps, and some dark corner where a crack on the head awaited him; but the next moment, silently losing himself in the depth of her glance, he knew that if she wanted to lead him straight to the brink of Avernus, he would still go with her. Instead she led him back of the colored waterfall, and then through a window out upon a narrow platform where the

fresher air of night surrounded them. They were evidently at the back of one of those moving electric signs which are the jewels of Broadway's crown. At the end of the framework Mell caught glimpses of a serpent running around the margin, and vaguer reflections of lights like rubies, first turning into emeralds, and then into pearls. Through the fretwork of the sign could be seen the cañon of the street below, swirling currents of humanity moving along a river-bed, and apparently with as little volition as the ripples on Fundy's tides.

"It's great out here, isn't it?" said Mell. "Inside, I never thought there was anything outside like this."

Again her reply was inconsequential.

"Listen," she said in a low voice. "What were you phoning for?"

"N-nothing," he answered after an uneasy pause.

"What are you doing here tonight, anyhow?"

"N-nothing," he answered again.

He felt her glance upon him—a glance that said: "Look at me!" At first he pretended not to see it, but it wasn't long before they were looking at each other—both wistful this time, and touched with trouble, too—trouble, in turn, which was gradually softened into wonder on Mell's part.

"I don't see what you want to lie for," she said at last in her low voice.

Neither said anything then for a while—the gentleness of her tone had robbed it of reproach; and they stood there in silence for as long as it might take a dancing couple to do the grapevine, the orchestra behind them playing, "Oh, Baby, Make It Hot"—its music surging in muffled waves through the half-swung window.

"Did you know there was a reward out?" she asked.

"Yes," he said. "Are you going after it?"

"I am not! I've squealed too much already. That's what I wanted to see you about when I saw you here tonight—to keep me out of it. It'll only make trouble for me, and I've got enough as it is, without wanting any more to keep it company."

SHE might have been an old woman, Mell thought, to hear her talk.

"How old are you?" he suddenly asked.

"Old enough!"

She laughed at that; but the next time they glanced at each other, they might have been friends for quite a while. Then her eyes grew wistful again, and slowly a bitter line appeared between her lips.

"Listen," she said. "Do you know the reason why I squealed last night as much as I did?"

"Huh! That wasn't squealing!" he stoutly assured her. "That—that was only telling me to watch the bear."

"Sure, I know. And anyhow, give me credit for this: if you'd have been a cop, I wouldn't have done it. But when you came along and said you were a reporter—why, somehow it seemed to me that you had just been sent—if you know what I mean."

"I know. You bet I know," said Mell almost under his breath.

"And now I'm going to tell you why I did it. Ed Dowell got my brother Jack into a bootlegging scrape this spring; and Jack—well, he's doing a year for it, poor kid. Ed Dowell's a dirty little masher anyhow, and in with all kinds of crooks—and I should worry now if he gets sent away for a year or two himself, just to see how *he* likes it—"

Inside, the dance-music came to an end with a crash like a cubist tin-man hitting the sidewalk.

"That's my cue to beat it," said the girl, turning to the window. "I got to get ready for the second act. But anyhow—you'll keep me out of it now; wont you?"

"You bet I will!" said Mell—more fer-

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vently, it might be thought, than the occasion demanded.

"Good-by, then."

She gave him her hand; and after he had shaken it, he still held it—even though her foot was on the windowsill and she was pulling to get away.

"No, wait," he said all in a breath. "If I want to see you again—I don't even know your name yet. And when can I see you, anyhow? When do you get through here?"

"About half-past twelve," she said, as though wondering a little; "when the second show's over."

"And what did you say your name was?"

"I didn't say—but it's Dorothy—Dorothy Woods."

"Dorothy," he repeated. "Dorothy Woods." There was something like reverence in his voice, and there was probably something else as well; for as the girl in the cape hurried back to the dressing-rooms, her neck and her forehead were nearly as red as her cheeks, and she was saying to herself: "You darned fool! You great big fool, you!"

MELL returned to the telephone-booths, from which he could watch the elevator without being too conspicuous; and whenever he thought that anyone was looking at him, he pretended to be searching for a number, or lifted down the receiver without raising the hook and called up 6000 Nothing. He was stalling thus when the elevator door opened, and Charles Peter Hooper emerged with his two genial assistants, who in turn were followed by two young gentlemen, fashionably dressed, who might have been college men, out with their instructors and taking a course in Sociology, first hand.

"Ah, there you are," said Charles, as Mell hurried over to meet them; and turning to the first two he had brought with him, he added, "This is the young man I told you about,"—adding again with good-natured emphasis, though whispering all the time: "The young man who will claim the reward for giving information leading to the conviction and so forth, and so forth."

"Oh, that's all right, Mr. Hooper," said the shorter of the two. "You know the rules of the Department about rewards as well as we do."

He had kindly eyes, and the soothing, somewhat mournful manner of an undertaker; but the one who was with him was an iron-faced heavyweight who seemed to make a specialty of the manufacture of dirty looks.

Both men were in plain clothes.

"This is Detective Morgan," said Charles, indicating the soothing gentleman. "And this is Lieutenant Coffey—the two of them known for getting more confessions than all the rest of the force put together. And now, gentlemen, it's up to you. From this time on, I'm simply an innocent spectator."

Detective Morgan immediately turned his soft brown eyes on Mell. "You say the man's here," he asked, "—the man who was the look-out in Rapiëff's window last night?"

"Yes sir. His name's Eddie Dowell, and he's probably back in the dressing-room now. He takes the part of an alligator pretty soon."

"Then I'll take the two boys and go get him, while the rest of you make yourselves comfortable in the proprietor's office. It's Nicky Bloom, Pete; know him as well as I do. Give him a line on what's going on, or he'll think we're here to raid him."

THE office of Mr. Bloom was a comfortable room, warmed with paintings of the most painted sex, and cooled with electric fans; and as soon as he was assured that neither his liberty nor his property were being threatened, Mr. Bloom mopped his head and became the prince of hosts—even Mell accepting one of the cigars from the box which was thrust before him. They were

lighting up—all but Lieutenant Coffey, who smoked his dry and held it like a flagstaff from a second-story window—when the door opened and Detective Morgan reappeared with a pale, sleek-haired young man in a blue silk dressing-gown. Outside the office door, Mell caught sight of the young sociologists, one of them carrying the bear-skin costume.

"This," said Morgan in his soothing voice, "is Mr. Eddie Dowell; and Eddie and I, I hope, are going to be good friends."

He placed a chair for the young man in the dressing-gown—a chair which commanded a bull's-eye view of Lieutenant Coffey.

"Now, Eddie," said Mr. Morgan, drawing his own chair forward so that he sat between the two of them, "I want you to tell me something. Here are you, a young man of unquestionable talent, whose animal impersonations are spoken of from one end of the country to the other—What were you doing in Rapiëff's window last night?"

Even Mell could see the shot had told.

"Now, wait a minute, Ed," said Mr. Morgan, more soothingly than before. "Don't deny it. Every half-baked crook begins that way—and you're not half-baked; and unless I miss my guess, you're not a crook, either. Just fell in bad company; that's all. Did it more for a joke than anything else, and wouldn't have done it for half a million if you'd have known that a man was going to be shot—probably fatally, and all the circumstances pointing to you."

"How do you mean—pointing to me? I don't know anything about Rapiëff's window."

"Pointing to you, naturally, because you were the last man out. All the others had gone when you came out of the store and drove off up Sixth Avenue in the taxi. So of course they'll say you did it, if they haven't said so already; for believe me, Eddie, we're on this thing red-hot. You're only one end of the trail, and just the same way that we jump on you, we jump on the others too."

"I AINT saying anything," said Eddie, and tightly closed his lips.

"Now, Ed, don't," pleaded Mr. Morgan, rising from his chair and walking around the room, thus leaving Lieutenant Coffey open for inspection. "Everybody knows that an innocent man will always talk—talk all night, if you'll let him. But just because I approach you like a friend, please don't misunderstand me. You'd be surprised at some of the ways in which the Department can make a man speak, if they want to listen to him."

"I'll say he'll be surprised!" suddenly boomed Lieutenant Coffey, his brown hands resting like hams upon his knees.

"Now, just a minute, Pete," coaxed Mr. Morgan, sitting down again. "Let me have one more chance at him. Ed," he continued, looking like an angel of mercy, worried at the sins of mankind, "you can either come through now, or you can wait till the rest of that wise bunch frame you up to save their own necks. The only difference is this: If you come through now, I'm your friend, and I make things as easy for you as I can. Maybe you think that's just plain bull, but I'm going to show you a few letters that some of my boys have written me—some of those, I mean, who took my advice and got in under, while the getting was good. Now, you glance these letters over, Eddie, and I'll call up the hospital and see how Rapiëff's watchman's getting on. . . ."

"Hello, hello. . . . Is this Roosevelt Hospital?" he was presently calling. "This is Detective Morgan. How's Rapiëff's watchman getting on—the man whose deposition I took this morning? . . . What! He is? Oh, I'm sorry! . . . When did he die? . . . About an hour ago. . . . Yes, thank you very much; good-by."

"It's murder, then!" suddenly boomed the



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lieutenant, rising and drawing a pair of handcuffs from his pocket.

"Now, just a minute, Pete," said the other, though much less heartily than before. "I started out to give this boy the best of it, and he shall have one more chance if only for his people's sake. And then if he still doesn't want to be wise, you can take him, and you'll know what to do with him better than I can tell you. Now, Eddie, for the last time: How did you happen to be in Rapieff's window last night?"

THROUGH the partition a girl could be heard singing the Lullaby from "Jocelyn"—the girl who worked herself up to melodic frenzy; and for as long as it took her to sing the first two lines of the chorus, the issue in the office hung undecided; but just as Lieutenant Coffey started to stride over with the handcuffs, Eddie moistened his lips and said: "Because they stumped me to do it, as much as anything else, I guess. Said I didn't have the nerve. Said my act was rotten anyhow, and wouldn't fool a blind man off the stage."

"Ah-ha!" gently rejoiced Mr. Morgan, rubbing his hands together. "So you're coming through, are you, Eddie?"

"Sure I'm coming through," said Eddie virtuously. "What do you think?"

"But mind you, now, it isn't because you hope to profit by it. It isn't because you've been bribed or frightened into it. It isn't because you've been promised anything, and I call all you gentlemen present to witness that. It's simply because you're a white man, Eddie, and I'm a white man, and we both want to do the thing that's square and right by everybody. Isn't that the way you feel about it?"

"Sure, that's right," said Eddie, blinking, but trying to look as noble as he could.

"To save time, I think we'll take his statement now," said Detective Morgan, "if Mr. Bloom will let us have his office to ourselves for a few minutes."

They were interrupted by sounds of a row on the other side of the glass slide which separated the office from the cashier's cage.

"I tell you I won't pay it!" said a voice which seemed dimly familiar to Mell.

"But that's the rule—you've got to pay it. All waiters are responsible for their own checks."

"But I tell you he slipped out on me—a little fellow with a blue suit and a blond mustache. If ever I see him again, I'll have him pinched—the dirty little crook! Regular dinner, two-fifty, cover charge, two dollars, and fruit lemonade, four dollars. You think I'm going to pay all that—me, a poor man like me?"

Mell blushed so hard that it nearly burned him, and as they left the office together, he turned imploring eyes to Charles Peter.

"Oh, Mr. Hooper," he whispered, "that was my waiter hollering. Can you—do you think you can let me have another eight dollars for a column in advance—so I can pay my bill? Or the first thing you know, I'll be arrested too, and what am I going to do then?"

MELL was waiting at the bottom of the elevator when the girl came down at half-past twelve, and she gave him that nod which is hard to describe, but which means: "I thought you'd be here." She had cleaned off her make-up, and for the first time he saw her as she really was—a quiet girl, rather pale, but always with depths in her eyes that couldn't soon be forgotten. They fell into step, Mell thankful that she was no taller than himself, and they sauntered up Broadway together.

At first they were quiet—too much noise and too many people for confidential conversation; but as they approached the Circle, now and then they had a stretch of sidewalk to themselves.

"I was down at the *Star* office awhile ago," Mell told her once. "They've got the whole gang—caught them over in Jersey City—and most of the furs as well."

"Do you think Eddie will get off, for telling on the others?" she asked.

They had to wait awhile, then, for passers-by to clear away.

"Mr. Hooper says he won't get off altogether," said Mell. "He'll probably get a year or two; but the others are due to get it good and proper."

Down on the street the air was hot and sticky—like the bottom of an oven might be where pies have been baked, and boiled over, and baked again in the fog of their own juice.

"Not much sleep tonight," said the girl.

She paused, as though undecided, and Mell thought at first that she was dismissing him.

"Which way are you going?" he anxiously asked.

"I'll tell you what I generally do on a night like this," she said, "when one of the other girls is with me. We get on top of a Riverside bus and ride up to 135th Street and back."

So they started for a bus together.

"You don't think I was too mean—do you—telling what I did last night?" she asked when they reached their next empty stretch of sidewalk. "You—you've no idea how hard it made it for me, with a lot of people I once knew, when Jack was sent away."

"I know," nodded Mell, and sighed rather than spoke as he added: "Haven't I been through it all?"

He told her then—told her, and knew that she believed him. It might have been her own brother that she was unconsciously comforting, her hand toward the last upon his arm. "Poor kid!" she breathed. And again in a murmur of infinite pity: "Ah, you poor kid!"

AT one of the cross-streets a suggestion of a breeze passed over them for a moment.

"It'll be cool on the Drive," she said. "I love the trees, and grass, and things like that; don't you?"

He told her, though awkwardly, some of the things which he had dreamed on the Tip-Top Roof that night.

"Of course I didn't believe then that I was going to get the reward," he said, "but Mr. Hooper says I'll have it sure now. And as soon as I get it; you know what I'm going to do? I'm going to buy a little farm somewhere, with fruit-trees on it, and a strawberry patch—a farm where I can keep a couple of cows and a horse, and cut my own wood, and raise my own vegetables—"

"And chickens?" she asked.

"Chickens, you bet."

"And flowers around the back door?"

"You bet."

He looked at her, and saw that she too might have had dreams that were not unlike his own.

They crossed the Circle together, a number of busses rolling past them, their back seats dedicated to lovers, or those who might yet be raised to that eminent degree. At the corner a Riverside Drive leviathan rolled up to the sidewalk with the majesty of a liner making her dock, and Mell and Dorothy got on, Mell going up the stairs first and waiting for Dot at the top. The back seat was empty, and so were a number of others toward the front. Dot hesitated for a moment, and then a lurch of the bus almost threw her into the back seat.

For a while they rode in silence, but by the time they reached the Drive, at least they were talking as much as they wished to do—the river with its rippling lights to the left of them, the trees with their whispering branches above them, a fairyland, a dreamland where two may dream as well as one, even on the back seat of a bus.



Men who "know it all" are not invited to read this page

THIS page is not for the wise young man who is perfectly satisfied with himself and his business equipment, who believes that the only reason he is not paid twice as much is that he has never been "given a chance."

This page is a personal message to the man who has responsibilities, who feels secretly that he ought to be earning several thousand dollars more a year, but who simply lacks the confidence necessary to lay hold on one of the bigger places in business. We should like to put into the hands of every such man a copy of a little book that contains the seeds of self-confidence. It is called "Forging Ahead in Business" and it is sent without charge.

We have in mind, for example, a certain man who is now auditor of a great corporation in the Middle West. Until he was thirty-one years of age he was a bookkeeper. His employers had made up their minds that he would always be a bookkeeper. His wife was beginning secretly to wonder. Worst of all, he

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WE LIVE BUT ONCE

(Continued from page 79)

her a chance to do the right thing and let us go, let us be happy. If she won't play fair, I'll tear the damned world to pieces, and build another one where I can be with you.

"Till then, I am helpless. You said awhile ago that if I touched you, you'd cut my throat. With things as they are, I'd cut my own throat before I'd touch you. But I want you to remember that every moment I'm with you, my arms are aching for you. Every moment I'm away from you, I'm thinking of you, and wanting you and working toward the day when I can come and say: 'Valerie, will you marry me?' Will you wait? Will you try to be patient with me? Can you forgive me for all the wrong things I did before we met? Do you still love me?"

He stared at her fiercely, and she stared at him. They were like Pyramus and Thisbe peering through a cranny in the stone wall that parted them. She tried to speak and could not. She tried to smile, and her lips were tremulous with tenderness.

But her eyes—across her eyes broke a stream of blinding tears. When she locked her eyelashes on them, they squeezed through. He saw them moonlit and pitifully beautiful. They drenched her cheeks and rained upon her gloves as her hands went frantically to work to set the car in motion.

They were deft with long practice and had no need of her blinded eyes or her tormented brain as they ran to their complicated errands. The machine that men had made worked so much more perfectly than the life the gods had designed that, after the sudden whirl and throb of the awakened engine and the soft engagement of the gears, there was no sound except the purr of the motor and the susurrus of the rubber on the concrete highway.

VALERIE leaned her heavy weight on her arms as they lay across the wheel. She steered by instinct and paid no heed to the alarming record of the speedometer. Yet, fast as they ran to the west, the earth rolled faster toward the east, and they were carried backward toward the onrushing day.

Valerie seemed to have some understanding of the helplessness of her most powerful will against the pull of the world, but she fought on against space and despair. She foresaw the battle that Amy would fight. The weakling had tremendous allies, too; all the gigantic ideals and nobilities of the world were on her side.

The night ahead was turbulent with passing headlights. Valerie hardly realized that by and by the whorls of chaos were gathering into orderly street-lamps, dim windows of homes and glaring fronts of shops.

She saw little of them; for her tears poured out of her soul into her burning eyes as fast as the wind could whip them away.

Now and then one of them smote Fleming's dry and bitter eyes. It was his throat that was filled with a man's tears, dust and ashes and wrath.

BEN AMES WILLIAMS

There is no more popular writer of short stories in America—among people of discriminating taste—than Ben Ames Williams. For this magazine he has written a remarkable story under the odd title, "TRIP." It will appear in an early issue.

SOON Valerie had to dim down the headlights of her car and lose them in the constellation of the lamps of Los Angeles. She must check the slashing flight to a demure procedure. She must veil the tragedy of her face in a languid indifference to the inspection of the public.

They were once more within the menace and coercion of the countless laws of human traffic. Already, in spite of their consecration to their own code, they must pay the tribute of deception to the written codes, steal up on their battlefield, hunt cover, and invent camouflage. Already, these dauntless warriors of love who were going to trample the conventions underfoot, if need be, were glancing this way and that to see if they knew anybody who knew them.

They paused alongside an enormous street-car spilling over with light and passengers. At all the open windows elbows were stuck out; bony arms of men in wrinkled sleeves, brawny arms in bulging coats; women's fat bare arms like naked thighs and knees. Beyond were unbeautiful faces stupidly peering around shoulders to study the couple in the smart car.

People in a crowd were so ugly, so defeated, that one felt ashamed to be human. These were the creatures one must fear—these poor ignorant workaday peasants for whom the laws were made and who upheld them for their own bondage. It was to avoid angering or bewildering these creatures that one must abstain from life! Individually they were pitiable. In mass they were as terrible as drops of water forming a glacier that cannot be hurried or checked.

Blair thought he recognized somebody in the street-car, but was not sure. He sat a little farther away from Valerie. As they rounded a corner, somebody called out from the curb: "H'lo, Blair!"

He twisted his neck but could not see who it was, nor be sure whose voice had hailed him.

Valerie knew few people and was known by few, but she had an uneasy intuition that Amy and Jimmy St. John were in the car alongside, or the one that was coming up, or had just shot by with a derisive honk.

She had an impulse that she longed to follow: to drive Blair straight to his house and go in with him to fight it out fair and square. She told Blair of it with a laugh. He laughed too, but at the impossibility of such a sane, straightforward thing.

"It's too much out of your way," he said. "Just drop me anywhere along here."

"How will you get home? Oh, damn that word!" she gasped, the torture of her plight wringing the sudden protest from her aching heart.

He clenched her elbow fiercely, the only caress he dared venture.

"I'll pick up a taxi and be there in no time."

She wanted to warn him or promise him that if he went fast enough he would probably find Amy at home with Jimmy St. John or not yet home with him. But she could not play the cat.

Something inspired his heavy soul to do the one thing that could give Valerie a little comfort. He wondered that he had not thought of it before. He said:

"What am I talking about! I'll ride home with you and take a taxi from there back to my office."

"Back to your office?" she faltered. "At this hour?"

"I'm going to sleep there."

"No, you're not! You couldn't sleep there; you need your rest."

"I can't sleep anywhere else. I don't want to go to a club. It's too conspicuous. I'll go back to my office."

She was crying again. It was the one thing he could have done to make her feel that he belonged to her henceforth. She whipped the car around and set off for his office. She was at the curb before he understood her purpose.

"You can't leave me here and go all the way home alone! I won't have it!"

She laughed with a proud and triumphant childishness. "I'm always alone. I expect to be alone a great deal from now on. What are you afraid of?"

"You'll not be alone a moment that I can spend with you. And I'm afraid to have you by yourself with these midnight motor-maniacs tearing through the streets, these gunmen that hold up cars and beat women to death, or worse. If you die, I'm going to die with you."

"Please get out, my darling, and don't draw a crowd wrangling with me."

"Please drive on before the crowd gathers, for I sit tight."

It amused her to see him so stubborn. It gave her a curious delight to let him rule her. For the first time she enjoyed the wifely privilege of surrender.

She drove on. She exercised an unwanted care in avoiding other machines. She carried Caesar now. Her heart sang all the way out Wilshire Boulevard, and only sank when she stopped at the pillared gates of Fremont Place to let him out.

"I'd better drive into Aunt Ada's garage alone," she explained.

"I'll stand here and make sure that you are safe," he whispered.

She moved the car along a little till it fell into the shadow of the high gates. He understood, and in spite of all his beautiful words about not touching her till he was free, he made ready to take her in his arms. And she was now in no mood to cut his throat.

But he took his love too earnestly, and his pledged word was as sacred to him as she was. So he fought down his desperately yearning hands, stepped quickly backward from the car, and closed the door upon his all-but-unconquerable temptation.

Standing so near, he put his hand to his lips and threw her a kiss; and she, with her eyes burning upon him, won the battle with herself, for his sake, knowing how much a man prizes his word. She blew him a kiss across her palm. She tried to laugh about it, and be frivolous, but the tears dripped on her hand, and she knew that she must run away lest her tears overwhelm his honor.

She drove the car away from his presence.

Her hand waved to him till she turned into the Pashley drive. He caught one more gesture, a thrown kiss, which he answered. Then she was gone.

Chapter Nineteen

HE waited to be sure that she was safe. He walked up to where he could see the moonlit garage with its doors closed. He could not see her, and he did not know which window was hers. He turned away at last, cruelly wounded because she had not appeared somewhere to signal him once more that she loved him.

She had had some trouble arousing the butler, who had fallen asleep, and could not believe that the back-door bell was worth answering. He told her that her aunt was waiting up for her in her room.

But she ran to her own window. To her cruel disappointment, her lonely eyes could not find Blair on the walk or in any of the shadows. He might have come that close and waited for one more gesture of love!

She lingered a long while, assured that

he would return like another *Romeo* to her balcony. But he was at the outer gates fighting with the ropes that drew him back. His foolish reason prevailed over his impulse, and he marched off toward town, looking backward for a taxicab.

The few that passed were preempted by loving couples. Innumerable cars flew past till the avenue was a Brocken-flight of black reptiles with flaming eyes. In every car at least two heads were together, two figures enarmed, or looking as if they wanted to be but dared not, or had lately had a lovers' quarrel. In some of the cars young men and women were packed in couples till they almost spilled over on each other's laps, hugging, kissing, heedless of observation.

Some were drunk with liquor, but all were drunk with moonlight. It was a carnival riot of amorous violence and defiance. Down the dark side-streets, cars were parked with quenched lights.

Blair sneered at them and imagined vain things of their occupants before he realized that tragedies and problems as solemn as his own might be in debate in any of those wheeled cells. While he and Valerie had sat agonizing over their own fate in the shadow of the orange warehouse, innumerable cars had passed them, and doubtless none of their passengers had given them credit for a serious thought. Here he was joining the very mob whose ridicule and suspicion so enraged him when they concerned Valerie and his holy love for her.

BEFORE a taxicab came his way, he had walked a mile or two through the Wilshire wilderness of palms and pepper trees, camphor trees, poplars and eucalyptus, flaming eucalyptus, firs and cedars, oleanders, roses in Persian profusion, cannas, poppies, petunias, all the flowers, shrubs of every region, smothering the ancient desert in gardens so dense that the homes were half submerged. In the moonlight the trees, the bushes and the flowers seemed all to be sculptured and stained with a patina of eternity.

The hour and the fragrance of it intoxicated Blair and it maddened him to be driven away from his love instead of toward her. He had never known what longing meant till now. It was a suffocation, a torment that made him groan, and kept his blind hands groping to find that body of their desire.

In the Pashley home Valerie had gone reluctantly to her aunt's room to tell her that she was safe. It had seemed harsh to waken the mountain of flesh that was dreaming herself perhaps as lithe as a gazelle in the mating season. Aunt Ada was merciful with her questions, but she had to ask a few. And while Valerie was trying to keep her wits about her to answer them guardedly, she was none too easily subduing a Bacchic frenzy to run after her love and take him to her arms.

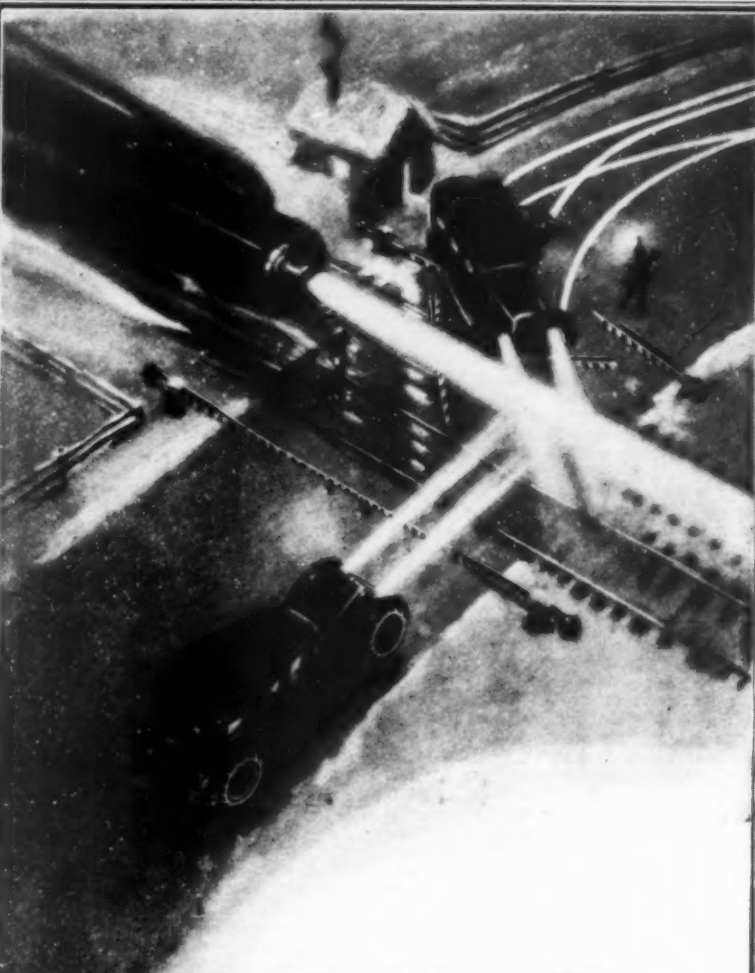
She broke away from her aunt at last after much bad imitation of yawning sleepiness, and regained her room, where she leaned against the window and gazed at the sky, the stars, the moon withdrawing behind the Spanish tiles overhead.

She stood flat against the window till she was so worn that she must cling to the frame for support. And at last she drooped to the floor and cowered there until she grew cold and must lift herself like a woman that had been flogged. She could hardly stand long enough to take off her clothes while her tub filled with steaming water.

Her one comfort was that Amy Fleming had a lover. She was so lovelorn that she wished Amy well, and felt that she would be doing Amy as great a service as herself in freeing her from Blair.

THE taxicab deposited Fleming at the door of his office-building, where a drowsy night elevator-man admitted him to

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the deserted lobby, carried him up to his deserted floor and closed the iron gates upon him. He let himself in at his office door, switched on the lights, pulled down the curtains, and wondered where he would sleep.

He drew two big leather chairs together and stretched himself out, lighted a cigar and gave himself up to thought. The telephone was in such easy reach that he was hardly able to resist the temptation to call Valerie up and pour out his love to her again. But he knew that she would have to sit in the hall to talk to him, and for her sake he forbore.

Abruptly he remembered that he had told his secretary to tell his wife that he would not be home until midnight. And here he was not coming home at all! He must telephone her, or she would be alarmed. He could not flatter himself that she would miss him as a lover. Yet she would surely miss him as a piece of familiar furniture. She did not really love the piano or the sideboard, but their absence would leave a gap in the system.

Besides, she was very timorous. She hated to sleep without a man in the house. That made him laugh with a weary cynicism. The Filipino boy slept in the room over the garage, but Amy often expressed a greater fear of him than of a burglar. She was one of those women who are always afraid about men—afraid to have them near, and more afraid not to.

A STRANGE change had taken place in the chemistry of Blair's reactions to Amy's qualities. Hitherto he would have traveled half the night to save her from being left alone the other half. He was always hovering about her to protect her. Nothing so clarifies the reason about one woman as falling in love with another. Everything that concerned Valerie was now mystic and vital and frightfully beautiful. Amy was left out in the chill sharp light of the morning after.

What good could he do her by trying to protect her? Who was going to attack her? Nobody ever had molested her. If a burglar entered the house, he would be more afraid of one scream of Amy's than of all Blair's strength or any firearm he might carry. For Blair to try to drive a burglar away from Amy was more likely to make her a widow than to save her from any danger to herself.

As for telephoning her, he would doubtless waken her from a sound sleep, and frighten her out of her wits. If he did not call, she would probably assume that he had come in quietly and gone to bed in his own room, as he often did.

He could still do that, and be on the ground when she woke. His clean clothes, his bathtub and his shaving things were all at home. He would have to go back in the morning, anyway. He started to rise, but fell back. He was too tired.

Besides, he felt a certain symbolism of loyalty to Valerie in refusing to sleep under the same roof with Amy. The divorce was already a fact, save for a few legal formalities and delays. Amy might as well learn what it meant to take care of herself. It would do her good. It was not well for women to lean too heavily on men. She had left him alone whenever it happened to suit her, whim.

What had she ever done for him except to use him as a ladder to climb out of her dismal home and still as a ladder to go on climbing? She would spurn him when she got high enough. She already looked down on him for his manifest lack of interest in her fads.

What would she say when he went to her in the morning with the news that he was never coming back—that she and he were to join the innumerable caravan eternally wending its way to the divorce-court across the pages of the newspapers? They had often

congratulated themselves that they had kept out of that increasing procession. They had boasted of what was coming to be a distinction, almost an eccentricity: neither of them had been divorced.

His heart began to melt toward her. After all, she was a pretty little thing, and he had no right to hurt her. He cursed himself for a selfish beast. Then he thought of Valerie and her eyes upon him when he left her; he remembered the flood of tears she shed when they paused by the roadside to hear his declaration of his duty.

He had seen the crimes, the imbecilities, the insanities that love had driven other men and women into. He had wondered at his clients and despised them, or at least pitied them, for their follies. And now he was stricken mad, and it was up to Amy to decide how far he would have to go to free himself.

But free himself he must, for now he was where Tennyson's pitiable *Launcelot* had found himself from love of *Guinevere*:

*His honor rooted in dishonor stood,
And faith unfaithful kept him falsely true.*

A ferocious battle raged between the angels in his soul, the good and evil angels—he could not tell which was which—that fought for Amy and fought for Valerie. He fell asleep at last, and the cigar in his hand dropped to the floor, charred a little hole in the rug and expired.

His last hope and his first dreams were of his talk with Amy: a plea that she should be as generous with him as he would be with her if she had a lover and came to him to ask for her freedom.

But he did not even dream what Valerie knew: that Amy had had a lover. It would all have been so easy if Amy had kept her lover. But Jimmy St. John had seen her in that most unhappy moment when she vowed to him that she would never let Valerie Dangerfield steal her husband away from her.

So Jimmy had ceased to be a lover and had become only a liker. . . .

While Valerie and Blair were asleep in the fatigue of their thwarted devotion, Amy was lying awake, resolving a little more grimly than ever that Valerie should never, never, never have Blair Fleming.

She had gone through a most unhappy evening with Jimmy St. John. He had called on her, and they had taken a long drive in the busy ocean of that moonlight. They had ridden out to a lofty headland on the Santa Monica palisades overlooking the boundless moon-fretted waters of the Pacific. There Jimmy had attempted the usual. She had won the usual defeat and bemoaned her weakness and his wicked strength in his arms.

Struggling as feebly and intermittently as a netted gazelle, she had protested that he did not love her all in all, only and always. To her astonishment, he had admitted it. This brought her out of his arms with an instinctive strength that she had carefully avoided using. She berated him with a tone of indignation altogether unlike the tone she used when she reviled him lovingly.

"You don't really love me?" she raged. "Yet you dare—"

He answered in a most matter-of-fact manner, quite foreign to the rules of the game they were playing:

"Look here, Amy! I might have lost my whole heart to you, if you hadn't given yourself away. But you're only having me on. I'm nothing but a—side-kick, or whatever you call it. I'm hep now. You love your husband in your own pretty, ghoulish way."

She dared not say that she did or that she didn't. She simply opened her mouth like a sick goldfish and said as much.

Jimmy laughed at the mute exclamation:

"You know you had me going. I was crazy about you. You were so cute, I guess. I was quite off my feed. I was just about woozy enough to propose an elopement, a divorce and all that sort of rot, when you flared up and said that you proposed to keep Valerie What's-her-name from getting your husband. If you loved me, you'd be much obliged to her. But you can't keep me as a lover and hang on to the little old hubby as well."

Again she uttered that cry of goldfishy horror. He dazed her further:

"I'm rotter enough to play around with idle wives—the only leisure class you have in your country. I don't mind consoling the part-time widows of busy business-men. I'm not averse to filling your empty hours as best I may. You're pretty as the devil, and different from the rest. But I'll be—pardon me, but I'll be damned and more so—if I'll ever give anybody my love except on equal terms, if you know what I mean. I mean, as you say, 'a swap.'"

She found a few faint bubbles of tone: "You mean that if I loved you altogether, you'd love me altogether?"

He could be a brute when the occasion warranted, so he let her have it:

"I could have loved if you could have loved. But now I know that you never could love anybody really, except your exquisite little self. You're perfectly justified in adoring your adorable self. But I dislike rivalry intensely. You never loved your husband. You don't love him now. You never loved me. You never will love anybody. You're a contradiction in terms, a cold-blooded mammal—a quite perfect specimen, but—you have charm, and I'd be tickled to death to go on with this sort of thing. But—love? No, my darling, let's save the word for a time of need."

When he tried to take her in his arms, she scratched his hands away. When he grew angry and tried to kiss her, she bit his lip. He drove home with a bleeding mouth and red lines across his hands.

"I deserve it," he laughed. "I tried to tell the truth and flirt at the same time. It can't be done. I'll never try it again."

SHE was the indignant, honest wife all the way home. She left him with the majesty of insulted virtue and profaned domesticity—which was splendid of her. But Jimmy could not stop giggling. She heard him as she slammed the door on him.

Amy looked about for Blair, went to his room and stared at his empty bed. The man was never at home when she needed him. If he had been, she would have insisted on his going out like an American man and beating that Briton who had insulted all American womanhood in her.

She had a good angry cry in her room, administered furious punishment to her pillows, then straightened them out for comfort, and sat down to make her face ready for sleep.

She wept into her cold cream and was most unhappy. How could she get along without Jimmy! He was so distinguished in his quaint English ways. He pronounced "Saint John" "Sinjun!"

And she had lost him.

Now let that Valerie Dangerfield try to get her husband away from her! Why wasn't he at home? He was probably with that creature! All the fury of a woman doubly scorned blazed in Amy's little heart till it was red-hot. She longed to avenge on Valerie the slight she had suffered from Jimmy St. John. Especially she wanted to make her husband pay for his absence at such a time of all times.

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WHEN IN ROME

(Continued from page 86)

they miss their grapefruit in the mornings and it takes 'em a long time to get over it," remarks a cowboy; but at last, here they come, packing their little pancake saddles.

"Now," says Bearpaw, as His Lordship come near, "according to our agreement of last evening, this contest is to be played on the square. I'm giving you all the best of the deal by letting you pick out your own horses—most of 'em are gentle; and if you pick out a bad one I'll give you the privilege of another pick. Go ahead now and do your picking; I'll rope 'em out for you."

Quite a bit of picking was done before three horses was decided on. The horse His Lordship was to ride was a good-sized bay and one of the best cow-horses in that *remuda*. He only had one little trick, and that was when first getting on him of mornings, he was apt to do anything but stand still, but outside of that, which is never noticed, that horse was plumb gentle.

The two valets drewed pretty fair horses as to size but neither one of 'em knowed very much. They was just good "circle" horses. One of 'em would buck, but that was very seldom, and he couldn't buck hard—that is, very.

The horses all caught, we started saddling, and had to wait some more there. It struck us queer how it took so long to put on one of them little bits of saddles.

Bramah got tired of waiting and got aboard his Skyrrocket horse just "to top him off," as he put it. There was some more delay about then because His Lordship had got all interested in watching that pony buck and Bramah ride.

Finally the saddling went on again, and the nobility was making ready to mount. His Lordship grabbed his handful of double reins and stepped back to reach for the stirrup, when his horse whirled and went the other way.

The reins being over his head made a jerk on the bit as he whirled, that caused him to rear up, and the next second His Lordship leggo his holt on the reins.

Bearpaw caught the horse and led him back to His Lordship.

"You don't handle your reins right," he says; "besides, you've got enough reins and bits on that bridle for a six-horse team."

His Lordship sort of got red in the face at that, but he had no come-back just then; instead he put his interest in watching Bearpaw, who was showing him how to gather up them reins so he'd have control of his horse while getting on. The style wasn't according to riding schools mebbe, but it was sure convincing, to both man and horse.

It took quite a little trying before His Lordship could get onto the best way of straddling a horse, and he didn't get onto it very well, but with the coaching of Bearpaw, and after catching the horse a couple of times more, His Lordship finally did get in the saddle, and there he was, setting like a knot on a log and a-hanging onto all the reins with a death-grip.

ALL the while that was goin' on, the two valets, who knowed all about riding, had stood in their tracks and watched Bearpaw eddicate their master; then came their turn to climb on. A feller came from the old Texan as he watched 'em reach for their stirrups.

"Where did you-all learn to ride—in a merry-go-around?" he asks. "Don't you know you're apt to get your Adam's apple kicked off a-trying to get on a horse that a-way?"

Here the old feller got off his own horse and showed 'em what he meant. "Never get back of your stirrup to get on," he says, "not with these horses. If you want to

stay all together, stick close to their shoulder and get your foot in the stirrup from there."

The old Texan's talk didn't stand for no argument; every word he said was well took in, and acted on according, because it was realized that what he said was for their own good. One man forked his horse without any trouble much, and that left only one more to contend with.

That last one, though, managed to let his horse go out from under him twice. "It's no wonder," says Bramah, who like the rest of us was watching, "with them iron stirrups a-flapping. I guess they're hard to find."

Near an hour was spent in getting the nobility mounted and ready to go; then Bearpaw took the lead out for the day's first circle.

"We're considerable late getting started this morning," says that cowboy to the cook as we all rode by the chuck-wagon, "and don't fix anything to eat till you see us a-coming back."

From there we started on a long lope as usual, and as we was going over a pretty level country, all went well. The nobility kept up in fine shape and seemed to enjoy it to the limit. Only once did they slack up some, and that was when a prairie-dog town was crossed. The big holes them dogs made looked like a natural place for a horse to put his foot into and turn a flip-flop. Bearpaw caught 'em up on that slowing down, soon as they got to speaking distance again.

"You'll never turn nor head off a range critter if you keep a-looking at the ground," he says.

The country kept a-getting rougher and rougher as we rode, and pretty soon we begin to get in some bad-land breaks; it would of been a good goat country, only it was a cow country. A ways further, and on reaching a high knoll, we scattered; I drewed one of the valets as a pardner; Bramah drewed the other; and Bearpaw took it onto himself to initiate His Lordship in chasing the cow.

With this valet for a pardner I was hearing considerable about fox-hunting and cross-country runs as we rode. There was a lot of words that feller said which had me guessing, and far as that goes, his whole talk had me listening mighty close so I could get the drift, but pretty soon, as the country kept a-getting rougher, I didn't have to listen any more. Sliding down bad-land points seemed to have took the talk out of him.

WE rode on till the outside of our territory was reached, and then circled, bringing with us whatever cattle we found. We had upward of sixty head with us and headed for camp in good shape when, spotting another bunch, I left the valet to go get them, telling him to keep the main bunch headed straight for a butte I pointed out.

The cattle had a downhill run and was going at a good clip, and I figgered this valet, being used to chasing wild foxes, sure ought to be able to keep up with spooky range cattle, but as I topped the ridge and got the other bunch and headed 'em down a draw to the main bunch, I was surprised, on looking back, to see that that *hombre* had lost considerable ground. He was just a-trotting along, and in rougher places would even bring his horse down to a slow walk.

It was either lose the valet or the cattle, and being I didn't want to lose the cattle, I fogged in on them and kept 'em headed straight for the cutting-grounds. I figgered the valet would catch up with me soon as we hit level country again, anyway. There was no way of his getting lost, 'cause the cattle and me was sure leaving a good trail and plenty of dust for him to follow.

When I hit level country and looked back,

I was surprised how that feller was still so far behind; he was only a little speck in the distance. The cattle had slowed down by then, but even at that, I'd reached the cutting-grounds and camp, turned my horse loose, caught me a fresh one and was back to the herd with the other riders before that feller showed up.

"What," I thought, "would of happened if we'd been running mustangs instead of cows?"

"Well, I see you lost yours too," says Bramah, a-riding up and bringing his horse to a stop alongside of mine. "This valet I had done pretty well, though," went on Bramah, "and I didn't lose him till his horse started fighting his head on account of all them bits. I guess he was leary that horse might dump him off any minute."

We was a-talking along, when here comes Bearpaw. That cowboy had no cattle with him but instead, and a ways behind, came His Lordship and that other valet which Bramah'd lost.

The noon meal came in the late afternoon that day, and it was over with quick. Fresh horses was caught all around, and leaving a couple of men to hold the morning's drive, the second circle of the day was started off in another direction.

His Lordship and the two valets wasn't in on that second ride; the thirty-mile circle of that morning's seemed enough. They was kinda sore and stiff, and the way they'd rub their shin-bones went to show that the little narrow stirrup strap on their pancake saddles had developed teeth and dug in from the instep on up. We figgered they'd drawn out of the contest and that they was finding how it was one thing to ride around for sport and when a feller *jolly well* feels like it, and altogether another when that same riding turns out to be work.

ON account of being delayed that morning, it put us late getting in with our second drive that afternoon, but being we had no nobility to keep track of, we made pretty good time. His Lordship and two men showed up on the cutting-grounds soon as we got there, and mounted on the same horses they'd rode that morning, watched us cut out and brand. Once in a while one of 'em would try to turn back some critter that'd break out, but most always some cowboy would have to ride up and do that little thing for them. They was having a hard time sticking to their saddles as the cow-horse would try to outdodge some kinky critter, and they didn't dare let that horse do his work, from which we figgered that the polo game His Lordship described to us as being so strenuous must be kinda tame after all, compared with the side-winding of a cow-horse working on a herd.

A big red steer broke out once and right in the path of His Lordship. Being he was there, His Lordship tried to turn him, but Mr. Steer was on the warpath and wouldn't turn worth a nickel. The light that was in that critter's eyes hadn't been at all noticed by that person, but the good old cow-horse he was riding noticed it, and that's how come that when that pony dodged out of the way, His Lordship didn't dodge with him. Instead, he found himself near straddling that red steer as he headed for hard ground.

"Daggone queer," says one of the boys, who alongside of me was watching His Lordship shake the dust off himself, "how a man that's had so much teaching in horsemanship, as they call it, can fall off a horse the way he's done, without that horse even bucking."

"Maybe it's them saddles," I says. "That has a little to do with it, but he'd a-fell off one of our saddles just the same." Two grinning riders closest to the bunch-

quitting steer started out a-swinging their ropes with intentions of turning that steer over a few times and to behaving, but Bearpaw, who'd been cutting out, came out of the herd about then and told 'em to put their ropes up and let the steer go.

The boys didn't know what to make of that till Bearpaw explained so everybody could hear.

"We don't want to forget," he says, "that we can't rope and throw a big steer off of them pancake saddles which His Lordship wants us to use, and being we might have to ride on them things later on, we better begin to realize it now, and gradual, so as the shock won't be so sudden."

SO the steer was let go, and every other critter which couldn't be turned without the help of the convincing rope. Then that night, while every rider, his Lordship and all, was gathered around the fire, Bearpaw got up in the middle of the conversation and gave us boys another blow.

"I've cut out two cows and a steer," says that feller, "and they're in the main herd. The cows have their noses full of porcupine quills, and the steer has a horn growing in his eye. Tomorrow, Bill," (pointing at me), "you can start out with 'em, take 'em to the home ranch, run 'em through the chute and squeezer, saw the bum horn off that steer and pull the quills out of them cows' noses. You ought to get over there and back in three days. Of course," he adds on, "we could stretch 'em out and do that little job right here, but we'd have to rope 'em, and that's plumb past the usefulness of a pancake saddle. We'd just as well start getting used to that now."

Things went on that way for a few days, and in all that time no hint was passed

that the contest had come to an end. It was plain to see who all was the losers, but so far, there was no giving in from the nobility. If anything, His Lordship seemed harder-headed about it than ever, and even though the little flat saddles was getting abused something terrible, and stirrup-straps and cinch-straps kept a-breaking and being patched up with baling-wire, there was no sign that they'd ever be set aside.

Then one day Bearpaw got peeved. The wagon had made camp close to a town which was on the skirts of the Y-Bench range, and Bearpaw had rode in and come out with a brand new saddle which he'd had made to order before he ever dreamed that pancake saddles would ever come into his life.

Bearpaw rode into camp and straight on to where His Lordship was rubbing some greasy stuff over his burned face and cracked lip.

"See this new saddle?" he begins, and without waiting for an answer went on: "Well, I aim to use it; if not on this range, it'll be on some other. I've given you the best of the deal and tried to show you how worthless your pancake saddles are out here, and you don't seem convinced. So, tomorrow, if you want to go on with the contest, you'll have to ride the average of the horses we do, not the gentlest, and I'll bet that before you get through you'll notice the difference between riding out here and riding out in the parks where you come from."

His Lordship listened to all Bearpaw had to say, but not a word came out of him as the cowboy rode away. We was a-wondering if by sunup the next morning we wouldn't be all paid off and hitting for new ranges.

It was near dark, and some time after

Bearpaw had left His Lordship, that we noticed him a-talking to his two men, and after a while seen 'em all going to where three horses was picketed. We noticed 'em saddle up and ride away, and at that we wondered some more.

We didn't see 'em come back that night, but we noticed the next morning that they'd got back all right, because in the dim light of daybreak we could make out the shape of their horses picketed in the same place as the night before.

BEARPAW was still het up on wanting to teach the nobility a thing or two and he drank his black coffee like he had a grudge against it, but not a word came out of him as he made biscuits and fried beef disappear, until Bramah, who was the last man up that morning, came close to the fire and started reaching for a cup and coffee.

"Did you fellers see what I just seen?" he asks as he filled his cup.

Receiving nothing but blank looks from all around, Bramah laid down his cup and says:

"Come on, waddies—I'll show you."

He took the lead, and we followed him to where His Lordship's three horses was picketed, and then a grin begin to spread on each face, even on Bearpaw's, for on each one of them horses was a 'honest-to-God stock saddle, and on His Lordship's horse we all recognized the old saddle Bearpaw had left at the saddle-shop in part payment for his new one.

"And look up there," says Bramah, pointing at His Lordship's tent.

We looked, and the grins spread, for floating in the morning breeze from top of each tent was a white flag.

THE KEY IN MICHAEL

(Continued from page 65)

cheeks and told me to be wise—"Sois-tu sage!" as the French mother says to her child.

It is always some little memory which tugs at our heart when a friend is newly dead.

BEFORE going to bed that night I hid the mysterious sheet of gray paper in a belt which I wear next my skin when traveling. And I locked the door of my bedroom. There was more than a chance that I might be the guardian of something extremely important, which I had better not meddle with until I had consulted with Boris.

But you know there is nothing which fascinates me like a mystery. Though I might try to keep my mind off the puzzle, the mind spins its own web on the borders of sleep. That short line at the end of the figures, "In 1739," with the first words, "Left Bank," drew around themselves all sorts of memories about the left bank of the Seine in the thirties of the Eighteenth Century. I thought of the Hôtel Biron, finished in 1730; but its street number is not 27 B. Then in 1735 was built that little hunting-lodge in the Ruelle des Gobelins. The year "1739" had a gruesome association, for that was the birth-year of Charles Henri Sanson, the executioner under the Terror—though he belonged to another quarter of Paris. . . .

But my falling asleep did not end the events of that night. The window-ledge of my room was not more than three feet from the flat roof of the garage. It was still dark when I was awakened by a slight sound outside my window.

I always know where my revolver is. In three seconds I was sending a shot—aiming low, for the legs—at a huge figure which had just risen to its feet at the far end of that

roof. The man had climbed up from the garden wall—an athletic feat.

With a smothered cry he disappeared. I heard him drop on the other side of the wall; then after a moment I heard uneven running footsteps in the quiet street beyond. Hit, but not badly wounded!

Midnight marauders are no novelty in my life, but I wondered if there was some link between this one and the Vorontsov puzzle.

I rushed downstairs to the telephone, called up the police, the Sûreté, made myself known to them, and reported the case.

"There's a street-lamp on the corner," I said, "and I saw the broad face of a man, his huge bulk, the dark cap he wore. He made off limping in the direction of the railway track. If you catch him tonight, telephone me" (I gave the number) "and I will come down and identify him. Otherwise it will have to wait two or three days, until I come back from Nice. Please give my regards to Inspector Lagrange and the Chief."

I spent the rest of the night on that lion-skin couch in the studio, to be near the telephone. The servants had awakened at the sound of the shot, but I reassured them and sent them back to bed.

The police did not report a capture that night, but the next morning François and I found bloodstains on the garden wall. I told the butler that some thief had probably read in the newspaper of the family's absence in the south, and was after the silver.

I was not so sure of it myself. Until I knew what that cryptograph meant, I was keeping an open mind. The face I had seen in the light of the street-lamp was decidedly Russian. . . .

My meeting with Boris in Nice was affecting. He had been deeply attached to his grandmother.

When I showed him the "key," his face went white.

"But I know nothing about it—nothing," he gasped.

We were sitting in my bedroom in the hotel.

"And the Princess never taught you a cipher," I asked, "never talked about one? Neither she nor your father?"

"Never anything definite. But she was always interested in mysteries—after she met you. Five or six years ago, when you told us about the Rigaud case and the secret writing, you remember how keen she was. This paper is in her handwriting. Of course it may be a copy, but if so, who has the original? And how did it come to be hidden in my father's portrait?"

I GOT up and walked the floor, thinking. Boris was watching me, and there was a glint of excitement behind the grief in his eyes.

I stopped beside his chair, and looked down at him.

"Some secret of great importance may be hidden here," I said. "That is probably what she intended to tell you, on her return to Paris. Perhaps she had come to question the gypsy's prophecy that she would live to be ninety-eight."

The quick tears filled his eyes—spilled over.

"But I never could read it, Dexter—never in a thousand years."

"I'm sure that you couldn't. And I'm sure now that she meant me to help you with this, when she said, 'Tell Dexter Drake.' If she had had time, if she could have controlled her speech, she would doubtless have told you all the details of whatever secret is hidden here. I feel that she laid a charge upon me, with her dying breath."

The dear boy asked me to read the cipher

—as if it had been a sheet of music! He had always believed I could do anything.

I sat down again, and took the paper from his hand. Then for the first time I examined it closely.

The highest number, 36, and the lowest, 3, proved that the letter signifiers did not go straight from 1 to 26, the number of letters in the English alphabet. There was a definite system of skipping, therefore. "Left Bank—in 1739" pointed clearly enough to the English language.

"As you see," I said, "there is no division between the words. That makes it immensely more difficult to read."

And if this was a secret writing which the Princess had made herself, she was clever enough to avoid the obvious. She would never copy a ready-made cryptogram. I believed from the first that that very ingenious creation was hers.

There were sixty-seven numbers in all. I made a little table which showed that there were eighteen *different* numbers used.

BORIS had been watching me in silence, nervously pulling at his little golden mustache. Suddenly he leaned forward:

"Dexter! Do you think—you know my father was very close to the Czar. Though this paper is in Grandmamma's writing, I wonder—"

The same question had occurred to me. But I told myself that when I had read the paper, when I knew what the Princess wanted me to do, I could judge for myself whether I would go on with it.

Let me tell you briefly—for the reading of ciphers is a fine art—how I confidently started on my labors. I made another table, which showed the number of times each symbol was used.

You know, of course, that the letter "e" and the word "the" appear oftener than any others, in English. As the figure "5" appeared oftener, eight times, was it "e"? Of the seven three-number combinations ending in 5, two were alike—35-26-5. Ah! Had I found the word "the"? Once, also, 5 was doubled as "e" is constantly doubled, in such words as "free," and "street." But when I glanced at the first five numbers, 5-35-26-5-18—oh, if 35-26-5 was "the," then the writing began with "Ethe—," which was only possible if the opening word was "ether" or some of its derivatives and if 18 was "r." It took me some time to prove that 18 could not be "r," and also that 5 did not behave elsewhere like "e." Neither did 9, which appeared seven times, nor 26, which appeared six times.

"Well, well!" I exclaimed.

After an hour I had convinced myself that the word "the" did not appear in that writing at all, and that even the letter "e" must be well down on the list.

Then I knew—I knew that infinite care and labor had been expended upon this cipher, that the very words composing the message had been deliberately chosen by one who knew how to avoid the obvious frequencies of the letters.

I drew a long breath. I sat back in my chair.

"Is it going to be difficult, Dexter?"

"I'm afraid so. Your wonderful grandmother seems to have created a masterpiece of cryptography."

Boris gave me his affectionate smile.

"But you think she composed it herself?"

I nodded.

"But, why, why?"

"How can I possibly tell, until I have read it?"

"But what can that be at the bottom," he asked, "In 1739?"

"Being the clearest thing, on the surface," I said, "it is probably not what it seems."

Then I told him about the man on the garage roof.



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2319



"YOU WERE NEVER SO EXQUISITE!"

(Letters from Lovers: IV)

"WHAT was the mood in the room last night? Like starlight seen through wistaria blossoms. Like Orient love songs plucked on the sweet strings of strange instruments. The room was tremulous with the magic of it—and you were never so exquisite!"

FROM HER DIARY

"I am so happy—he was more wonderful to me last night than he has ever been. I wonder—did the temple incense help?"

NO matter how beautiful they were, no matter in what marvelous luxury they lived, the queenly women of the ancient East knew that if they burned temple incense in the chambers of their palaces they filled the air about them with a mood of mystery and romance. And they knew that a woman, in such a background, is always more fascinating. The subtle power to create the same alluring background has come down to the women of today, to set off their own appeal, in Vantine's Temple Incense. It can be obtained in six delicate Oriental fragrances at all drug and department stores.

What mood will incense spread around you? Send ten cents for six sample odors.

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"But your description," he cried, "makes me think of Sergey Kovalchuk. He came from one of our Russian estates and he was our Paris gardener until 1914. Three months ago he came to see Grandmamma. He was quite ragged. She gave him food, gave him money, clothes, and she got him a job somewhere. With whom? Oh, I don't remember!"

I lost no time in telegraphing my old friend Inspector Lagrange to look for one Sergey Kovalchuk, and ascertain if his legs were uninjured. It is generally easy to find a foreigner in France.

THE funeral of the Princess Vorontsov, in one of the Russian churches of Nice, was very impressive. What richness of temperament there is in those Slavs!

But in the late afternoon I left Boris with his Russian friends and went away by myself. I wanted to think, and all day I had not had a moment alone. I strolled down to the station, and took the first train for Monte Carlo. You know it is only nine miles from Nice to the gamblers' Mecca, and that view of the Mediterranean always frees something in me.

The Princess—an original soul she was—would have preferred that I mourn her that night in my own way.

I dined alone on the terrace and thought of her. In the days of her wealth she had told me gayly many a story of winning and losing at Monte Carlo. She had always insisted that some day a clever brain would "dig out the fault" in the roulette wheel and milk the Casino cow dry as a rock. Prince Michael, too, I remembered, had a weakness for watching the spin of the ivory ball. And he also had died down here.

After dinner I strolled into the Casino. Oh, I had not abandoned the problem of the ciphers! Having failed to make head or tail of it, I was giving my mind that refreshment which acts on our thought as a bath acts on the body. I went into one of the gaming-rooms—not to play, but to watch.

As I stood near one table, right before me were two middle-aged American women, a fat one and a thin one. The fat one, as I judged from their comments, was new to the Riviera. She wanted to play; but the thin one was trying to dissuade her with the warning that in the end the Casino bank always wins and the players lose, because of the zero at the head of the wheel—the bank's rake-off.

As I listened, slightly amused, an idea came to me. Could the Princess Vorontsov have been winning at the gaming-tables the money to keep herself going? The idea was not nearly so wild as it sounds. As everyone knows, many old ladies seem to make some sort of living at the tables, playing those little conservative systems of theirs.

Late that night, on my return to Nice, I went to Boris' room and asked him if his grandmother had been playing.

"Winning, you mean? But I really don't know."

He then showed me her Paris bank book, which he had just found. Five months ago the Princess had deposited fifteen thousand francs, three months ago twenty thousand francs. Those figures were something to think about.

But neither of us wanted to question the Casino people, nor anyone else. It would have seemed disrespectful of the dead woman.

LEROY SCOTT

has written another of his famous stories of Clifford, the Professional Friend, and it will appear in an early issue under the exciting title:

"DOUBLE HANDCUFFS"

Again Boris talked of the little he knew about her escape, how she had lain in the forest at night, had been shot at, had been half drowned.

"My father, you know, was not with her," he said. "They found each other in France. All her courage and gayety—oh, she was just trying to keep me in good spirits! But of course I can't study medicine now. How many years does it take? I shall have to give up the lease of the dear house, sell the furniture—just to exist, until I get some kind of work to do."

The next day we returned to Paris and I telephoned Inspector Lagrange at the Sûreté. Yes, the police had got Sergey Kovalchuk. At first he was half-hysterical, babbling about some letter from his mother in Russia. When asked why he tried to enter the house in the Boulevard Suchet, he had muttered, "Looking for something." Then he became stubbornly silent.

"We had better see Sergey tomorrow," I said to Boris, "and try to make him confess just what he was looking for."

"Oh, Dexter! It might have something to do with our puzzle!"

I intended to shut myself up, in that quiet house behind the garden, and wrestle with the "key in Michael." Whether it solved my friend's problem, or got him into deeper trouble, we had to know what it meant. There is something hypnotic about a mystery.

After Boris went to bed that night, in the Louis XIV room which had been Prince Michael's, I spent two full hours figuring out combinations of those numbers. Yes, the frequencies were all wrong. After "e" the natural succession runs roughly, *t, a, o, i, n, s, h;* "y" and "u" are well down on the list. But that knowledge was getting me nowhere.

Then I tried more recondoite systems. I had already tried reading it backwards, even tried French, German, Italian, with the same negative result. Suppose it were written in Russian, after all?

Of course, "27 B" might have nothing to do with a house on the Left Bank. Perhaps 27 was the letter "b." But there are eight letters, vowels and consonants, which can follow "b" in our language, and probably five thousand words which begin with "b."

Piqued and exasperated, I finally went to bed.

YOU know how, as we doze off to sleep, any casual words we have heard in the last twenty-four hours or so may go floating through the mind. I heard again that thin American woman in the gaming-room telling the fat one, "In the long run the bank always wins." In my half-sleeping mind, bank got mixed up with "Left Bank" and "27 B." Then one-half of my brain was reminding the other half that 26, not 27, was at the left of the bank's zero on the roulette wheel.

My heart began pounding. I sat up in bed—broad awake.

"Left Bank, 27 B, 26—"

Now what did follow 26, at the left of the wheel? Surely not 27, for the numbers in the circle are all placed irregularly. I had not played roulette for years.

"But it might be! It might be the key!" I cried aloud.

I leaped out of bed. In my bare feet I rushed down the hall and threw open the door of my friend's room, switched on the light.

"Boris! Boris, wake up! Have you got a roulette book?"

"W-wh-what?" he answered drowsily.

"Have you got a roulette book?" I repeated rather impatiently.

"A—a what?"

I plumped down on the side of the bed. "Any book on roulette. You must have

something of the kind in the house. Everybody who knows the Riviera—Wake up!"

"B—but I am awake. There must be one"—a deep sigh—"somewhere in the house. I'll look—in the morning."

"No, no! I must have it now. It's about the cipher."

That woke him all right.

"I'm not sure," I explained, as he threw on his dressing-gown and slippers. "I just had a sudden idea—I half dreamed it. But that's what acumen is, nine times out of ten—a quick grab at some floating subconscious perception."

"We'll try the bookshelves in the studio first," Boris said.

I stopped in my room to snatch a few garments, then followed him downstairs.

IN the studio we switched on all the lights and set to work, hunting along the shelves.

One of the first books I saw bore the title, "Cryptography." So the Princess had studied the subject!

It was Boris who found the roulette book.

"Look!" he cried. "It has a design of the wheel as a frontispiece!"

I grabbed it—examined it hurriedly.

To the left of the zero, "the Bank," the numbers ran 26, 3, 35 and so forth. The 27 was way around to the right, on the lower arc.

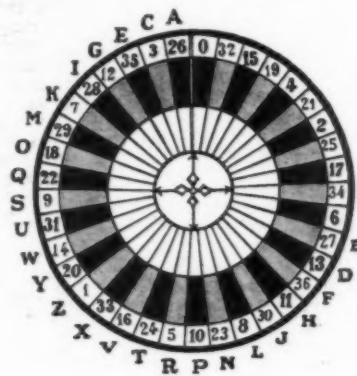
"But wait!" I cried. And I counted rapidly backward from 27. . . . "Why, Boris! There's just the right number of letters, twenty-six, going round to the left from 27 to 26, which is next to the zero; 'the Bank.' So 26 could be a."

"Dexter! You don't mean it!" He clutched my arm excitedly.

"If it begins at the left of the Bank, the zero," I said, "and if 26 should be a and 27 be b, then—don't you see?—the order of letters must jump back and forth between them. Then 3, next to 26 a, would be c, and 13, next to 27 b, would be d, and so on."

I began to write down the letters beside the numbers on the wheel diagram. Of course I might be chasing a will-o'-the-wisp, but suppose it should be the solution! Oh, it would have been clever—inferentially clever of her to have thought out such a thing!

Here is the scale I made. The black and red of the roulette wheel do not show, but the colors played no part in the Key in Michael.



My money-belt was still round my waist. In three seconds I had the gray sheet of paper in my hands, and was jotting down the numbers on another sheet, with the tentative letters beneath them. After the first four letters, I shouted:

"It works! Man alive, it works! I have got a word already—the word is rear."

Then I ran right on to the end without stopping.

Here is what I had!

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3-31-27-28-24-9-11-28-12-11-27-20-26-3-18-29-
c u b i t s h i g h b y a c o m
35-24-9-8-26-28-5-23-35-26-5-5-35-12-31-8-31-
e i s l a i r n e a r r e g u l u
9-29-20-9-24-26-5-9-26-5-35-9-11-28-23-28-23-
s m y s t a r s a r e s h i n i n
12
8

In 1739

It was the work of a moment to separate the words:

*"Rear of your sun,
Two cubits high,
By a comet's lair,
Near Regulus,
My stars are shining."*

"How she piled up the r's," I cried, "by using 'rear,' 'near' and 'lair' and the u's by 'cubits' and 'Regulus'! Look at the s's, too! How she kept down the number of e's, did not once use the word 'the,' and threw out all the usual frequencies! A technical masterpiece!"

"But, Dexter! What does it mean? Would she have appealed to you with her dying breath, just to decipher a poem in free verse?"

"Of course not. Can't you see—can't you read between the lines? What do you fancy she means when she says her stars are shining?"

"Stars?" His tawny eyes widened with wonder.

"Yes, what would she hide in a difficult code, and doubly hide again in these cryptic lines?"

"I'm sure I don't know. Something on the Left Bank—but how stupid of me! Of course 'Left Bank' and the '27 B' were only the key to the cipher itself."

His face fell. He looked around for a cigarette, lighted one.

"It seems to me, Dexter, that we're just where we were before."

"Does it? Does it?" I strode up and down the studio.

Boris, who had dropped down in a chair, looked round at me suddenly, and there was a look of awe on his face:

"It's just as if she were speaking to us from another dimension of space—'by a comet's lair, near Regulus, behind the sun!'"

Then I took from the shelf that book I had found, "Cryptography," and showed it to him.

"I know now—know for sure," I said, "that this cipher was written for you. Had she lived, on her return from the south she intended to give you the Key in Michael, give you this book on Cryptography, and then watch your struggles with them. The secret concealed in those figures will change your whole life. There is no other possible inference now. And how like her it was to make a great game of it! 'Perhaps Dexter will help you,' she said, when she knew I was in the house. Gay of heart, you know. Courage and gayety. The echo of tragedy under the childlike laughter."

If you could have seen that boy's face! "Now you ought to know what she meant by 'your sun'—yours," I said. "Something concrete—some object, when she says 'rear of.' Something known to yourself and your grandmother. Think, Boris, think!"

"Why—she gave me a sunset picture; it's hanging in my room."

We rushed upstairs again.

YES, there was the sunset hung high, at least five feet from the floor, and it was only a small canvas.

"But she says 'two cubits high,' Boris, and two English cubits are only three feet—not five or six. And look—only a blank papered wall behind it."

I sounded the wall—no sign of a secret hiding-place.

Then I tried another tack. "What did your grandmother ever say about a comet? I want the comet's lair."

"Why—why, they used to call her motor-car the Comet. It went so fast, you know, and it had a vapory tail. But she gave it to the French government in the early days of the war."

"The garage!" I cried. "The comet's lair! But she says 'by' a comet's lair—not in it. The studio is 'by' the lair." And I rushed downstairs again.

As I passed through the studio door, my eye lighted on something which brought me up with a start.

"I'm just going to think this out now," I said. "Will you lie down over there, on the couch in the alcove, and be very quiet?"

Boris stretched himself out on the lion-skin from the Rue Châteaudun. I went and sat down in the far corner of the room.

"How kind you are, Dexter, to take all this trouble for me!"

"Kind? But I wouldn't have missed this for worlds! It's a case of the sort which your grandmother used to delight in. I have everything now, but one link in the chain."

We were both utterly still for a minute or two.

"Your sun!" I leaped to my feet. "I've got it."

He came running from the alcove—breathless with excitement.

I pointed to that Louis XIV tapestry which hung, as I have told you, on the door of the closet, which with the alcove divided that end of the studio.

"When did she bring that tapestry down from your father's room—your room now?"

"Let me see—yes, the very same day she brought home the lion."

"Of course, of course! As every high-school child has learned, Louis XIV was the sun king, the *Roi Soleil*; the sun-disk was his emblem. It's all over the royal buildings of his time, and look at it—there at the top of the tapestry. Your Louis XIV room, your tapestry, your sun, therefore. 'Rear of your sun,' in that closet."

"But she says, 'near Regulus.'"

"Of course it's near Regulus. Don't you know the star Regulus is in the sign Leo, the Lion? Your grandmother bought that lion-skin for the alcove six weeks ago, you told me. So that was the time when she found the word *Regulus*, which had u's enough in it to help make that cipher obscure. Then she ran down to Nice—postponing the revelation until her return. I've not seen the inside of that closet, but closet and alcove are backed by the comet's lair, and behind your sun-king tapestry, two cubits high, three feet, we shall find—"

HE leaped at the door, threw it open, switched on the electric light which hung on a cord from the ceiling. On the closet floor were some cardboard boxes containing paint-tubes, a palette, paint-rags; and on the back wall was hung an old linen curtain, soiled and discolored.

The closet was shallower than the alcove, by fully two feet.

I drew the curtain aside—revealing a wall of paneled wood. The top of the lower panel was about three feet from the floor.

"Two cubits high," I said. And I began running my fingers along the top of the panel, feeling, pressing here and there for a concealed spring. That is one of my little detective specialties, you know.

Suddenly, noiselessly, so delicate was the mechanism, the panel tipped over from the top on its oiled hinges.

The smoke-gray steel of a small safe caught the light from the overhead lamp.

"Oh—oh! I never knew it was there!" Boris cried. "But the combination! We haven't the combination!"

"Yes, we have. Look at the dial. It's a double-combination lock, with a double-radiating disk. It requires both letters and numbers to get into this hiding-place of your wonderful grandmother's. Suppose we try, 'In 1739?' I kept that for the last. I thought it was not what it seemed."

I dropped on one knee beside the safe. On the outer ring of the disk I picked out the letters "i-n," then on the inner ring I picked out "1-7-3-9," and gave a twirl. But nothing happened—nothing. For a second I was nonplused.

"Of course, of course!" I cried. "We have to reverse it, in the code, turn the letters into numbers, the numbers into letters. But wasn't it witty of her, to use 'in' to get into a safe!"

It took only a moment. In the code, "i-n" became "2823" and "1-7-3-9" (as you will see by a glance at my diagram of the roulette wheel) became the letters "s-k-c-s," a "word" which no safe-breaker ever would think of.

I PICKED at the double-disk again, and my heart was going fast.

Another twirl—the safe door swung open. "But Dexter! It's only—why, it's only a pile of old rags!"

A chill ran up my spine. I spoke under my breath:

"You take them out—you—they are sacred—those rags—"

He made a little purring noise in his throat. Leaning forward, with trembling hands he drew out something and held it up—a nondescript woolen garment, half-dress, half-cloak.

"Wait a moment," I gasped; "there are other things here."

I drew forth a small, worn leather bag, with a strap to go round the neck. Behind it on the floor of the safe were a small revolver and a folded paper.

Then together we left the closet. Sitting down on the floor of the studio, facing each other, we reverently spread out the things between us.

"The revolver,"—I touched it with awe,— "that was of course for herself—if she should be taken by the Red soldiers."

The tears were running down Boris' face. My own eyes were wet.

I opened that worn leather bag, took out the contents: A little packet of tea, another of salt, a comb, a cheap knife, fork and spoon. A small brandy flask—empty.

Then I unfolded that paper—gave it to Boris, without a word.

It was a Russian passport. You know Russians have to have "papers," to go from one village to another in safety.

But this was the passport of one "Anna Kovalchuk, seamstress."

Kovalchuk! The name of that man on the garage roof.

Boris shook his head—he knew nothing about this.

I reached over and touched his hand. "Look—"

I was pointing to a round hole under one of the arms of that woolen garment—dull stains there were, too.

"A bullet-hole," I whispered. "The bullet passed through and out—see the other side of that seam."

He tried to speak—choked. He had seen those dull stains.

I was feeling the *inside* of that rough woolen garment, and now I took Boris' hand, flexed the fingers and pressed them against the coarse lining around the waist of it.

"Dexter!"

I thought he was going to faint.

"Steady," I breathed, "steady, dear boy. Bring the scissors—that's her little sewing-basket there on the table."

It pulled him together, having something to do.

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He got me the scissors, then just dropped down on the floor again, facing me.

In two seconds I held out my hand, palm upward—a great gleaming emerald!

THE Vorontsov jewels! A million dollars' worth! Eighty years old, she had got out of Russia with them—torn from their settings, and sewn in the lining of that garment of the peasant seamstress.

For herself she could never have done it. But for him—

After half an hour of cutting and ripping I had a large bowl full of priceless great stones—diamonds, rubies, pearls, emeralds, sapphires. And there were a few smaller stones, like those two which she must have sold for the fifteen and twenty thousand francs.

Why hadn't she told her grandson? Because she wanted him to work, not idle away his young life. But when she had that bad spell early in February, she must have realized that it was no longer safe to withhold the knowledge from him. He should work for it, though—labor and think and develop his brains. A great game she would make of it. Can't you imagine the shine of those brilliant old eyes of hers—eyes so incredibly young in that splendid old wrinkled face of hers—as she laughingly helped him with hints now and then to decipher the cryptograph? And when at last they had opened the safe—when he saw what she had done for him!

"Sois-tu sage! Study and work, my child, for we Russians have learned how uncertain wealth is."

Sergey Kovalchuk confessed to Boris and me the next day. In that letter from his mother, Anna Kovalchuk, she wrote him about selling the passport and dress to the Princess, who had paid her for them with a diamond. When Sergey learned that the Princess was dead, and that her grandson

was absent from home, he had thought there might be other diamonds in the house.

That wildly grateful young Boris wanted to share the Vorontsov jewels with me! It took me the rest of my holiday week in Paris to persuade him that I had just had the time of my life in finding them for him, that they were his lawful inheritance, like any other estate, but that they ought to be sold now and the money wisely invested. Of course I accepted one stone—oh, it was a big one!—as a souvenir of the Princess. It is still in a safe-deposit in Paris. When I'm tired of this business of criminal-hunting, I'll sell it and buy a nice house—somewhere on the Left Bank.

SO Dexter Drake ended his story of the Key in Michael, sitting there on the couch in our living-room in New York, some seven years afterward.

"Of course, Howard," he added, after a moment of musing, "the jewels were in no danger, so long as nobody knew that she had escaped with them. The safe had probably been in that closet for years; she had only to have the combination changed. Who would look for a secret writing between the canvas and stretcher of a portrait over the mantelpiece? And even on the unimaginable chance that the paper was found and deciphered, who would fancy that a few lines of *vers libre* about sun, stars and comets, had anything to do with the Vorontsov jewels?"

"Who," I replied, "except you, would have fancied it!"

"Ah!" The great detective gave me his quick bright-eyed smile. "But you are forgetting the strange message to me from the dying woman. And even I, you remember, did not find it so easy to read that ingenious, that unique cipher, worked out on the numbers of the roulette wheel!"

THE MORAL REVOLT

(Continued from page 37)

In the case of the Smiths, of course, there was plenty of money; but the sex impulse, which would normally have made this couple one, merely served as a wedge to separate them—because they used it ignorantly. It will not have that effect now.

ANOTHER somewhat similar case of the fruits of ignorance, that I have lately had to deal with is that of a couple whom I will label Mr. and Mrs. Charles Hill—that being as far from the real name as I can get. Please understand that in all these stories I make radical alterations in all facts that might serve to identify or direct suspicion toward the persons I tell of.

Mr. and Mrs. Hill were aged forty-four and forty-two respectively. They married in their early twenties. They were good conventional church people. They went to church on Sunday, and they had always taken great pains to see that their children received what they call a "religious education." They had brought their family up straitly in the way it should go, and so far as outward seeming went, the Hill family always behaved conventionally, and correctly, to the last degree.

Then one day Mr. and Mrs. Hill sought a divorce. The real facts never came out in the court. What they wanted was a divorce, not notoriety and scandal. But I learned the real truth because Mr. and Mrs. Hill came to me with their troubles before taking formal action, and because I was also on confidential terms with their seventeen-year-old daughter. As an example of the collisions that are constantly taking place between the old order of things in sex conduct, and the new, theirs is perfect. The husband and the wife talked different languages, and the daughter talked a third.

As Mr. Hill is a successful lawyer in Denver, and as his wife and daughter move in a social set whose names and pictures appear frequently in the society columns of the press, I knew of the Hill family in a general way. I was interested, therefore, when Mrs. Hill called me one day by telephone, and asked for an appointment, which I arranged for the next day.

In the long conference which I had with her I listened to the old, old story: a puritanical attitude on the part of the wife toward sex; a husband utterly dense in his sex knowledge; a long ordeal of grinding poverty through the first years of marriage; many babies, averaging seventeen months apart. Life for the Hills had been a drab affair, largely devoid of color, charm, beauty and joy. They had more money and more leisure now, but it had come too late. It had merely made Mr. Hill unruly and restive, and Mrs. Hill had become more prim, drab and set in what she regarded as her righteous ways of living than ever.

"I don't know that you can do much to help my relations with my husband," said Mrs. Hill to me; "but perhaps you can do something about my daughter Millie. She is with her father and under his influence. He is letting her go to late parties; he buys her elaborate clothes—in extreme styles—hardly decent; in fact she gets anything she wants. He never spent money on me that way. He never used to spend it so on her. He began it all of a sudden, some months ago. Apparently they understand each other perfectly. Millie's tendency is to take sides with him. She thinks I am old-fashioned and out-of-date."

"Mr. Hill and I have separated. He has taken an apartment, and has left me the house. Millie is with him. The younger

children are away in boarding-school, except the two youngest."

"Why did you and your husband separate?" I asked. "Please tell me the exact truth about it, Mrs. Hill."

"He does not respect me and my rights," she said with sudden vehemence.

"You mean you don't agree about your sex life?"

"I suppose so."

"And it's all his fault?"

She hesitated. "I don't want to be unfair to him. It is just that I have had a different upbringing. I know there are lots of people who find nothing abhorrent in things I can't for the life of me help detesting. Sex seems to me a horrible thing. It seemed so to my mother before me. I always thought that after we were through having children, we'd be done with it."

"And you knew nothing of it when you were married?"

"Nothing! And when I told him that I knew nothing of such things, he passed it off. And I comforted myself with the thought that we had to go through this so we could have children, and that justified our sin. It wasn't till later that I realized his own feelings were quite different. And when I understood his attitude of mind, I came to hate living with him."

"Well, Mr. Hill and I might have gotten along better together if we had not been desperately poor. Mr. Hill decided after we were married that he wanted to go into law. He was teaching at the time. So he took that up—and I'll have to say for him that he has made a success of it. But for long years, while he was studying and going to lectures at night, paying out money for his training and for costly books, how we did have to stretch a dollar, and how I did slave! And the babies came and kept on coming, one every year and a half, and sometimes closer together than that."

"Why didn't you inform yourself?" I asked.

SHE looked at me as if I had made her an immoral suggestion. "Why, that wouldn't have been right, would it? It seems to me that abstinence is the only moral way. Probably that is why God has made it all so repulsive—to teach us that the lusts of the flesh are sinful except for the propagation of the race. Besides, we must not try to frustrate God's purposes. And in this matter his purposes are perfectly clear!"

"There is a side of sex," I answered, "with which you have evidently had no experience; I mean the emotional side. That is what exalts and purifies what might otherwise be regarded as a repugnant thing. Do you remember when he first kissed you? Did you find any emotional exaltation in that?"

She gasped, and the tears rushed to her eyes. "Oh, Judge—yes—yes. But never again. Never! Is it like that? Oh—oh!" And with a little moan she sank her face in her hands. Then she looked up. "I guess I'm too old to learn," she said. "But I'm ready to admit that perhaps there may be another side."

"You see," I explained, "this marriage of yours has been a failure—has wound up a failure—because of the ignorance of both of you. Your husband could not understand your language of reluctance and false delicacy, instilled into you by your training. You on your part knew nothing of the force you were trying to oppose and shut out not only from your own life, but from his. You didn't know his language."

She had been listening with a look of keen interest. But now suddenly she eluded me; and the old look returned to her eyes.

"You're against me," she flared.

"I'm merely telling you some things you don't know," I answered. "Don't resent it. Let's go on with your story."



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"Judge," she said earnestly, "there is one thing I have not made clear. I want to give him his due. My husband is a good Christian man; and I have such faith in him that I have felt that he could not *really* want a thing unless I did. I think you attach too much importance to it."

"Oh!" I exclaimed. "Well, we can go into that again if necessary. Let's go on with the story."

"It was several years," she continued, "before Mr. Hill became a practicing lawyer. It was longer still before he could make a decent living. During that time I stood by and did my best and never complained, except that I never would give in about this. I had to work very hard, and what with that, and so many children, I soon lost what good looks I had—long before the struggle was over."

"Suppose your husband had done what some husbands do under like conditions. Suppose he had found him a sweetheart."

"Oh," she exclaimed, "I know it would be impossible for him to do anything like that. He is a good Christian man. But if I ever thought he would or that he did, I would divorce him in a minute. Besides, we have our children; and neither of us wants any more. So why should there be any further sex life between us?"

I looked at her—tried to read in her face some clue to her state of mind. In spite of all I had said—in spite of that one moment of insight that had come to her like a brief lightning-flash as she remembered her first kiss, her mind had slipped back into its habitual channel as the needle turns toward the pole.

This woman had gone to school, Sunday-school and church. She had been "educated" rather beyond the ordinary run. She was a perfect product of the puritanism that had made her. I had met hundreds like her, all fruit of the same training. Our civilization had produced this warped and twisted thing; such was the preparation with which she had been permitted by state and church to marry, bear children, and if possible make them as idiotically immoral as herself.

Questioning her further, I found that she disapproved of the new modes in music as being immoral. She didn't want them utilized and made better. She wanted them abolished. She disapproved of dancing, particularly the new dancing. She wanted that rooted out also. She thought the ways of young people shocking, and prided herself on having kept her own children apart from the dangerous currents around them.

In short, she was perfect and complete—the stanchest, the most unalterable human product that the old order could show. She was righteous, virtuous and good according to orthodox definitions of righteousness, virtue and goodness, and according to no other definition. So far as human relationships went, she was an intolerable prig and an impossible person. What her code amounted to in terms of practice could be seen in the fact that she could not live with her husband, or make him happy or herself happy in a marriage which, according to her, was recorded in heaven, and as fixed by the decree and sponsorship of God as the course of the stars.

Happiness or no happiness, she was hell-bent for heaven.

Now, what I am interested in is a heaven for humanity—sweating, swearing, toiling, loving, lusty, hating, worshipping, wonderful humanity.

These thoughts flew through my head for an impatient moment; then they passed, and I found myself pitying her—pitying her and wanting with all my strength to help her if I could.

We talked further about what might be done. What she chiefly wanted was that I get hold of her daughter Millie, and arrange for her to see the girl oftener, so she might

regain her hold upon her, and wean her if possible from what she regarded as the hostile and unsafe influence of her father.

MY next conference was with Mr. Hill. Here I found myself dealing with a thoroughly sophisticated man. In fact, what surprised me when I had talked with him a few minutes was that he had handled his relations with his wife so unskillfully. I told him so—privately thinking, as I still think, that he was the type of man who would be more or less wanting where tact and sympathy were necessary, though he would get on perfectly with a woman of his own temperament, whose desires were so like his as to need no difficult interpreting.

"Oh," he said with a shrug, "I had everything to learn. Like her, I was brought up in an overprotected home. Of course in those first years of our marriage I made mistakes. I can see now how I might have made a different thing of it if I had known what I know now. But it's too late now, much too late. That side of her has atrophied. Sex is her blind spot. It would be wasting your time to try to bring us together, Judge. I want a divorce, and she knows it. I think we had better arrange the terms of the settlement through you. After I get the divorce, I'm going to marry a woman I love; but Mrs. Hill doesn't know that yet. Of course this divorce, if she consents to it, will hurt me some socially and professionally; but I'm willing to pay that price for my freedom and happiness. And my wife will be happier without me."

"She's alarmed about Millie," I said, "and she thinks you have alienated the girl from her."

"She's done that herself," he answered. "If you don't believe me, talk with Millie. I'll send her around." As he spoke, he smiled a peculiar smile. "Millie used to worry me a bit," he added. "I thought she might run wild and get into trouble. But I've quit all that. When you see her and talk with her, you'll understand why. She's one of that Younger Generation you've been doing a book about. You'll find Millie an unusual kid for her age. She and I are very sympathetic, and we have talked a lot together. Ideas to which most kids are strangers are an old story to her."

BUT before he could send Millie a curious thing happened. Mr. Hill had indiscreetly confided to a colleague the fact, which he also confided to me in the course of our inter-

HUGH WILEY

It is a long time since Mr. Wiley's name has appeared in the magazines, but that has been due to his absence on a sailing cruise in the Gulf of California and around the Island of Tiburon—where, it is declared, the population is largely cannibal. But in an early issue a boisterously funny story of a remote California placer camp will appear under the quite natural title:

"BONANZA"

view, that he was having a *liaison* with the woman he hoped to marry when he could get a divorce. The colleague still more indiscreetly confided this news to his wife, as colleagues sometimes will. And the colleague's wife hied straight to Mrs. Hill and told her all about it.

I suppose she wanted to stir up the puddle. She succeeded. Mrs. Hill came flying furiously to me with the facts. "And now," she concluded angrily, "he can whistle for his divorce. I won't let him have it. He thinks he can pick up with this hussy and marry her. I'll show him. And you must make him give up Millie. He is no fit company for an innocent young girl—even if she is his own daughter. There never was a girl more completely protected from every degrading thing—while I had her. I've questioned her to see if she has been contaminated at school, and it is astonishing how everything I don't want her to know has passed right over her head. She is still a child—though a lively and high-spirited one. I wish she wouldn't wear her skirts so short," she added with a sigh. "And she got her hair bobbed before I knew about it—but it does make her look pretty."

I passed over the comments on Millie, and came to the point by observing: "You said you'd divorce Mr. Hill if you discovered him in an infidelity."

"Yes, but he *wants* a divorce. I didn't say I'd divorce him if he *wanted* it. Just wait till he tells *me* he wants a divorce."

Mrs. Hill was plainly in no state of mind to listen to arguments just then. I did the best I could, proposed that she see me later, and let her go. Having done that, I sent for Millie. I thought Millie might help. Besides, the contrast between the mother's and the father's account of the girl interested me. I wondered what she was really like.

The next day, at the appointed hour, there walked into my chambers one of the most completely fascinating little personalities it has been my fortune to meet with in the world of modern youth. Millie, to my fairly experienced eye, was clearly of her own generation. Incidentally, her resemblance to her father was striking. She was the type that matures early. She had escaped the *débutante* slouch, and carried herself with strength and poise. Her face justified her mother's account of her, and it in no way prepared me for her conversation. It was appealingly childlike and delicate; and her eyes were wide open, steady, guileless, and direct in their gaze.

I told Millie as much as I thought best concerning my talks with her parents. She sat back and listened with a comically judicial air, her knees crossed, her short skirt carelessly drawn back exposing her bare knees.

She was apparently unconscious of any impropriety in her pose. I made no comment. I reflected, however, on the fact that a few minutes earlier another girl had sat in that chair who was a very wild specimen indeed; and that she had been garbed precisely as Millie was garbed, and had displayed her person with the same apparent unconsciousness of doing it. Was the unconsciousness apparent or put on? The first girl had had numerous affairs, and it was taking all my ingenuity to get her straightened out. I made up my mind to find out about Millie before I was through.

"Dad and Mother," she said when I had finished, "ought to get a divorce. The present plan's no good. I don't know what Dad told you, but he's in love with a woman Mother's never even heard of. . . . Ah, he's a sweet one to be getting after me for coming in late from parties! But after I found out about his affair, he didn't try to pull any more preaching on me."

"You see," she continued, leaning forward confidentially, "I came to the office late one afternoon, after five o'clock, and walked right in on them."

"Well, Judge, I guess you'll think I'm pretty hard-boiled for a girl that's never let a boy do more than kiss her; but I know all about these things. You see, Dad shot the whole works at me a couple of years ago. Told me he hoped I'd go straight, but that anyway he wanted me to know. So I was wise. And when I saw them—well, I just leaned against the door and laughed and laughed."

"Dad," I said, "don't let it worry you. I won't say a word."

"Well, that made me see where Mother stood. I already knew, but that made it plain. I had a talk with Dad that night, and he told me the story. Poor Dad and poor Mother! But there's nothing to do about it. Mother doesn't know a thing that's going on. She thinks Dad is a 'good Christian gentleman,' and that she's got him by the throat because he is. As for her, outside of her church and us kids, she isn't interested in anything and doesn't know anything. If she knew all that's packed away in my head, she'd think she was the Scarlet Woman for even knowing that I knew it. Of course she can't understand why Dad should care anything about—well, you know what I mean—life, and all that. But, now that he's made the break, I hope he has a good time—I told him so."

THIS, I thought, from a seventeen-year-old girl! Aloud I said: "Millie, your mother does know. Your father told Mr. Herbert, and he told his wife, and she told your mother. And now your mother says she won't give your father a divorce, since he wants to marry another woman. She's angry, for one thing; and she doesn't think it would be moral, for another."

"What!" gasped Millie. "She knows? Say, Judge, that's awful. Poor, poor Mother! I'll have to go to her this evening. She just can't get that sort of thing. But I think I can manage her; and I'll bring her around here to talk things over. Dad's just got to have that divorce, you know, and marry and settle down."

"Bring her," I said.

"Poor Mother!" she sighed. "So good—and so dumb!"

Then she stopped, and I saw her lift her head like a little warhorse. "That cat that told her," she flared. "Ah—wait till I meet her! I could tell her something, but she'll find it out quick enough. Her husband hates her, and he's got a love-affair, and he's going to divorce her and marry his sweetheart. Dad told me so. So that's where she gets off."

This has since happened just as Millie predicted.

"Tell me, Millie," I said, switching the subject to herself. "You meant it, did you, when you said you had never had relations with any boy?"

She looked up frankly. "Sure I did. Dad and I talked all that over. He's been a boy himself, you know. And we figured there was nothing to it. I never have any trouble with petting and all that. Oh, yes, I've been kissed. I wanted to know what it was like. It doesn't amount to anything unless you like the person you kiss, Dad says; and if it doesn't amount to anything, why do it? I won't have those half-grown kids pawing me over and kissing me and all that."

"Some day I'm going to meet a fellow I really like—you know what I mean. He'll be big and tall, and I'll look up to him. That's the sort I want. And when I meet him, I'll fall in love with him. And believe me, when I fall in love I'm going to fall!"

"Then, if we cared for each other enough to want to stick, we'd get married and have some babies; only he'd have to have enough money to support them. I'm crazy about babies, Judge. I'm going to have a lot of them."



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"LET me get this straight," I put in. "Do you mean that you would have what your generation calls prenuptial relations with this hypothetical man?"

"Now, Judge—don't tell me I'm shocking you."

"Not at all. I'm interested. Did you and your father work this out together in your talks?"

"Yes—you know Dad is pretty broad-minded. Dad said: 'Millie, I'd rather you didn't have anything of that sort happen. It's always likely to make trouble between you and society. But it's up to you. I've told you all I know.'"

"And your father actually taught you these things? Of course you know, Millie, that there are mighty few parents who would take such a responsibility as that, even if they thought as he does."

"I'd have learned it from my crowd, even if he hadn't said anything," she answered. "Only, I wouldn't have learned so well; and I wouldn't have learned what to look out for. And I'd have been letting a lot of boys kiss me, the way the other girls do. You see, Dad and I have talked this thing over—simply for hours. We've got the same problem, in a way."

"Your mother has suggested that I take you away from him and turn you over to her," I remarked. "If she knew what you have been telling me of his influence on you and his ideas, she would be still more set on it. What's your honest opinion, Millie? Would you have been likely to have gotten into trouble, if your father hadn't taught you these ideas which by society are considered thoroughly immoral?"

"Of course I would. But Dad's got the straight of it. A little lovmaking goes a long way."

"Well, Millie," I said, "I'm much interested. I'm particularly interested in the way you and your father have hitched up. Now, one other thing: A few minutes before you came in, there was another girl, about your age, sitting in the chair you are in. She has gotten into trouble. I have to provide a secret confinement for her and arrange later for the adoption of the baby."

"Little fool!" remarked Millie. "But I suppose nobody ever told her anything. I've got some Dad," she added with a sage nod.

"No," I agreed, "nobody told her. She just plunged in the dark. Well, Millie, I hope you won't misunderstand me because it is merely that I'm curious about your point of view. That other girl, who is a pretty wild one, sat in that chair just the way you do."

Millie looked down carelessly. What I meant was quite plain; some would have said shockingly plain.

Millie was clearly not disturbed by my remark. "This doesn't mean a darned thing," she said. "It's more comfortable and freer; that's all. It's like the short skirts. Good people finally got used to them, and even took to wearing them, after they had about talked themselves to death against them. Then they bobbed their hair—after saying how bobbed hair was unwomanly." Here she threw back her head and laughed. Then added: "I suppose this short skirt of mine set you to wondering if I was as wild as that wild one, eh?"

"I wondered if she was conscious of it," I acknowledged, "and just what purpose lay behind it."

"And then you wondered the same thing about me," she put in. "Well, Judge, take it from me that with nearly all girls it doesn't mean a thing. Nothing at all. We all do it. She's wild and she does it; I'm—um—tame, and I do it." She paused and watched me like a bird, head to one side. "I'm all right, really, Judge. Mother's the immoral one in our family, only the old dear doesn't know it."

"I'll see her tonight, and then talk with you later. Can I go? Is there anything more? It's been awfully interesting to talk



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with you, Judge. With most people I have to shut up about what I think. Good-by, Judge." And away she went.

Millie talked with her mother as she promised. Later I had a conference with the three of them. Mrs. Hill finally came to take a less resentful view of her husband's infidelity, admitted that she was herself not blameless, and finally consented to the divorce, which certain clever lawyers later worked out, with Mr. Hill's canny assistance, along lines thoroughly noncommittal, so far as the court proceedings were concerned.

THIS story of the Hill family seems to me to teach several important lessons. It reveals in a typical way what is wrong with many marriages in which either the husband or the wife or both have been infected with puritanism in their attitude toward sex. In addition it brings into startling relief a fact to which I have referred in earlier articles—namely, that the Older Generation is in many instances taking its cue from youth. It is swinging around to a view of sex conduct very similar to that of the Younger Generation, with this difference—that the adult wisdom and experience modify the result.

The case of Millie and her father is typical of what I think is going to happen more and more. At least, my experience with a large variety of people convinces me that it will happen more and more, and I simply record the fact here for what it is worth.

In this instance the Older Generation and the Younger put their heads together, with certain clear-cut consequences. Those consequences will shock some of my readers, but they have to be reckoned with. Let's consider them.

For one thing, the Younger Generation, in the person of Millie, accepted from the Older, with the utmost eagerness, an adult revision of its own wild code. That revision was a kind of compromise. It did not go as far as conventional persons would demand, but it went a long way, and it produced a great improvement in the code which Millie would have adopted had she been left, like her companions, without adult counsel, sympathy and guidance.

Note what this revision of Millie's code involved: It involved voluntary and convinced restrictions, genuine restrictions, on indiscriminate petting and promiscuous intimacies. Petting, promiscuity and a crude and sickening willingness to be intimate with *anybody* that might come along—these were and are characteristic of the raw and half-baked code of Millie's friends. The utter want of niceness, of discrimination, of taste, seem logically the first things from which a girl of Millie's type would naturally rebel. And she would naturally and easily substitute the thought that it is well to be finicky and particular. Her father had the wisdom to see that, and he had no difficulty in making her see it.

Working this new, raw code over in his maturer mind, he turned it into something more canny and less dangerous. I think this was no mean service. Of course many of my readers will complain that he was no fit guide. Perhaps so. He was, I admit, rather hard-boiled, as the saying is. Also it is quite true that Millie's present code is still widely at variance with the conventional code of society; but she has at least cut loose from the demoralized, witless and intolerable cheapness of which others like her, having no adult guidance, have become the victims. If it were a choice between changing Millie's attitude toward promiscuous intimacies on the one hand, and toward the unconventional but discriminating *liaisons*, which she thinks are perfectly all right, on the other, I can't see how any sane person could hesitate for an instant in strongly preferring the latter to the former.

I have long predicted the rise between modern parents and modern children of some

relationship similar to the understanding that exists between Millie and her father. It came to pass just as soon as these two found themselves in sympathy instead of at odds. And the instant result, in this case, has been that discipline and restraint have found their way into a generally lawless social phenomenon.

It is a far cry from the code Millie has worked out with her father to the code which her friends have not worked out with their fathers—and mothers. Millie's code will refine

itself further as she grows older. And when she rears children of her own—what then? Will she have more to give them than her mother gave her? Will she have more to give than the parents who still think they must keep blinders on their children instead of fearlessly letting them see, under sane guidance, all there is to see, and know all there is to know? I think she will.

(Another article in this remarkable series by Judge Lindsey will appear in the next—the February—issue.)

IF WALLS COULD TALK

(Continued from page 71)

Brevort was a huge good-natured, tender-hearted giant of a Holland-Dutch massiveness and integrity. He had married a girl of his own class, whom he met first at a ball. "She was all in white," he told me once, "and she had the smallest waist I ever saw. When I asked her to dance with me, she said: 'You don't look like a dancer, and if you ever step on me, you'll kill me.' " He had enormous feet, and she was very small and saucy. She teased him, all through their dance, and she continued teasing him all the rest of their lives.

She was the daughter of a famous lawyer, let us say, who had made a fortune and a reputation by his eloquence and his learning. She had nothing to gain by her marriage with Billy Brevort, except a husband who adored her. She had an income of her own; her social position was beyond question; her culture and her wit gave her the entrée to circles that were closed to mere money. She married solely for love, and she got it.

When I first knew her, she was already past middle age, the social autocrat of her day, a brusque and eccentric character, much feared and equally beloved. She dressed extravagantly and rather too youthfully, in an attempt to keep up with the younger generation, and she imitated the informality of their social contacts when she entertained, but she never yielded an inch to any of the laxity in morals that began to be fashionable in her later days, and she defended her house against it implacably. If any man or woman overstepped the bounds on one of her house-parties in the country, they were on their way back to town next morning, before breakfast, and they never appeared under her roof again. It did not matter to her how socially important they were. A celebrated Englishman, to whom everyone was kowtowing, was entertained by her at a dinner in his honor; her cellar was famous, and he showed more interest in it than in anything or anybody else at the table, disdainfully, with a condescension that became offensive as

he drank. Midway through the meal he was plainly intoxicated, and she became furious.

"You'd not dare to do this sort of thing in England," she said, "and you sha'n't do it here." She called a servant. "Get this gentleman his hat and coat." The dinner was so large that the guests were seated at a number of small tables. Her husband came to her, horrified. "Help him to the door, Billy," she said. "And don't call a cab. Let him walk." He went out, staggering, with Billy's aid, and that was the end of him as far as she was concerned.

This sort of thing made her many enemies. She ignored them. They circulated scandalous stories about her, in revenge, but no one who knew her ever believed them. She was devotedly loyal to her husband, and he to her. That, I think, was the secret of their happiness. She was fond of company, and her house was always full of friends, but the healthy core of her life was her relation with her husband and her children, and that relation was founded on all the old-fashioned virtues and fidelities.

And here, I think, is the simple moral of the whole situation. The lives of the fashionable rich are peculiarly cursed with tragedy because their circumstances make it especially difficult for them to avoid the selfish ambitions and self-indulgences that destroy happiness in any walk of life. They resist the temptation best when they have been trained in childhood by parents who have already learned to resist it. When they come to maturity as the children of parents who have already half succumbed, their doom is certain. It is like being exposed to one of those infectious diseases of our modern civilization which kill off the natives of the South Seas. The only ones who survive are the descendants of men and women who have already resisted the disease and developed an immunity.

(Mrs. Lydig will offer another illuminating article on our ultra-smart society in the forthcoming February issue.)

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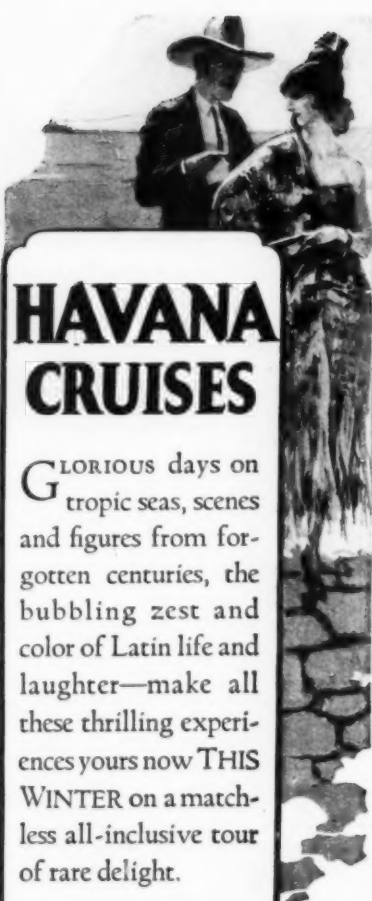
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CAME THE DAWN

(Continued from page 61)

Today I happened to be standing near the director, which is like all the men out here, who seem to think that because a girl is an "extra" like me I am willing to "pay the price." Not that anyone has come right out and asked me, but I can tell by the "leers" I am always getting, but they are held back by my cold haughty looks. But I was standing next to this director, who was pretending not to notice me, and so I said, "I am very happy to be working with you, Mr. MacMeal," and as soon as this Flora Pretty saw it all, she came right over, and of course Mr. MacMeal had to pay her some attention to keep the peace.

But in the afternoon there was a great deal of excitement. It seems Miss Pretty always works with three violins on the "set," claiming they give her inspiration to give the best to her public. So the three violins were being played for a scene she was to do with the wonder dog Fleetfoot, and Fleetfoot began to howl and could not be stopped. His owner said he always howled when there was music, and nothing would make him stop unless the music stopped. Flora Pretty got very tempermental, and said nothing would make her act without music, as she could not give her best to her public. And Fleetfoot kept on howling. So they rehearsed a scene without music, and sure enough, Flora Pretty was not giving her best to her public. But Fleetfoot was marvelous. So then they tried it with the three violins and Fleetfoot howled. So by that time it was time to stop for the day, and who knows how it will all end?

I am sure if I did not have my outside life outside the studios, I could not stand it. Today, between the wonder dog Fleetfoot's howling and Miss Pretty's crying and the director's swearing, I was worn out. But I had another wonderful serious talk with Mr. Scoop Martin, who is so different to other men especially Avery. I have to laugh now whenever I think of Avery and have to laugh at Avery ever thinking I could be interested in such as he. I have not heard from him for over three weeks. As if it made any difference to me! Mamma keeps telling me all Escanaba thinks he is engaged to this new girl, and I certainly hope Mamma does not think I care. I have my career which does not leave room for any man. And even if there was room after meeting a serious man like Mr. Scoop Martin I could never think of A. again. So I wrote a short note to A. tonight telling him I did not care to hear from him again.

Mr. Martin says it is very hard to work up enthusiasm in Los Angeles over an evangelist now, even a man evangelist. He is almost desperate. He says that sometimes he thinks he will go back to be a press-agent for some one in the "profession" but I told him I thought he should not. After working for a man like Willie Monday my kind of life would probably strike him as being very wild. He said seriously that that was all merely publicity and that he knew for a fact that Gloria and her marky played dominoes night after night, and that Mary was never so happy as when she had cooked something that pleased Mr. Fairbanks. But he said he had to think of something to rouse interest in Mr. Monday, and if I did not give him an idea he would go wild. Oh, Diary, it is wonderful to have a serious man depend on one for inspiration for his Big Ideas. I cannot help but feel that perhaps Mr. Martin is thinking more of me than of business, and I would not want him to do that as I am the kind of a girl which merely wants to inspire men and when possible to use them for my ends and then laugh at them as I do at Avery.

Sept. 10: Have finished my part in the wonder dog Fleetfoot's picture, "Black Love,"

and must say am glad to do same. They compromised by using a double for Fleetfoot that was so deaf it could not hear the music which was played for Flora Pretty's public. How deceiving life and moving pictures all are! Of course, when a serious man like Mr. Martin comes into a girl's life, she realizes a lot of things. He has asked me to go for an automobile ride tomorrow and I will probably go as I see no reason why I should not and there is no one to blame me no matter what happens. I suppose Avery is taking this red-haired girl out riding every night which certainly makes no difference in my life. You might say I have been abandoned by everyone, my own mother not having written to me for over three days. So I will go with Mr. Martin.

Sept. 11: We did not go for our ride as Mr. M. had some work to do. Studios very quiet as far as I am concerned though there were plenty of girls working. Well, I have laid down my philosophy of life for myself and I will not break it. I will not "pay the price" even to get a chance to work. I suppose word has gotten around I am the kind of a girl I am and that is why no one gives me a part. Sometimes I think if it were not for Mr. M. being so serious and believing in me I could not hold out much longer.

Sept. 12: Waiting for Mr. M. to come for me. Hope it is not a Lizzie.

SEPT 15: Oh how much has happened since I wrote in this Diary! How can I ever write everything? Little did I think when I sat down waiting for this terrible Martin person all that was going to happen. But I swear I am the same good girl I always was, but who will believe me? I fear echo answers No one.

But I am going to write down just what happened though I will certainly burn it before Avery and I are married. I think there are some things a girl should keep to herself if she is the kind of a girl which such things are apt to happen to. Oh, Avery darling, if you knew what I have been through! And if it had not of been for your darling letter what might have been the outcome of it all? Echo answers something terrible.

But I must write. I was waiting here for that terrible Martin person believing as any good girl might that all we were going to do was to have an innocent ride. I am sure I never gave him the iota of an idea to think otherwise. But I suppose I should have suspected something when I saw his awful Lizzie. But I am not the kind of a girl which ever thinks wrong of people and so I should be forgiven.

As soon as I was in the Lizzie he said he had "cooked up a plan" and all I can say is, how was I to think anything except that he was proposing honorable marriage? The mailman had given me darling Avery's darling letter just as I was starting, but I did not read it thinking it would not be polite, and anyway I thought A. was going to tell me he was engaged. So I thought I might as well say "All right" to this terrible Martin person when he said what I thought was a proposal to be honorably wed. So I said "All right, I am willing to do anything you say, for there comes a time in every girl's life when she must make a great decision, let the world think what it will!"

He said, "You are a good sport," and that he knew I would help a fellow.

So we drove some more, miles and miles. I almost felt as if I was on my honeymoon, and I kept making up the letter I would write to Avery about it all.

But oh how I was deceived! If there is a law in this land I will have it on this terrible Martin person. Or I would if it was not for darling Avery. Only at the time it all seemed exciting, and it was not until it

was dark and I had a candle I read Avery's darling letter. I was in the shack by that time, miles and miles from civilization. And just before he left me alone, this Martin person told me how he had arranged I should be kidnaped and that this Willie Monday was to find me and all I had to do was to stay there and be rescued but I must bury the caned things he had brought for food before I was rescued. There was only potted ham and crackers too. He said that kidnaping was a great "stunt" as it had gotten a lot of publicity lately only he handled this kidnaping a lot better than most.

Well, after he had gone I realized he had no intentions of being honorably married to me even after I was rescued. So then I remembered Avery's letter. He said he had been taking this new girl merely to the Bijou Rose merely to see my pictures so that she could see for herself what kind of a girl he really loved. But he said the exhibitor of the Bijou Rose never showed my pictures so he simply kept going so that he could show this girl once and for all there could never be anything between them. And he thought if that exhibitor did not show my pictures for some reason other exhibitors did the same thing and if I was not getting a fair deal out here why did I not come back to Escanaba and be married to him.

No one knows how I felt when I read that letter miles from civilization and of how nearly I betrayed Avery like the girl in Viola Dana's last picture nearly did it to her faithful suitor. And then I realized it would break my mother's heart if I stayed to be rescued even by an avanglist even if he could reach the masses because of me.

It took me a very long time to break out of that plate I can tell you. Then I walked and walked and walked. I might have been

walking yet only some people come along from Iowa, and they were going to Los Angeles and gave me a lift. I told them I was an actress on location and was lost and they were very thrilled. They are going to watch for my pictures. So finally I got home and put a note under this terrible Martin person's door and told him he did not need to rescue me. Something should be done to he and his ilk.

SEPT. 16: Have just telegraphed Avery that if he wants me to come back and be honorably married he will have to telegraph me enough money to get my ticket. Began packing.

Sept. 17: Avery telegraphed the money. Well, now my career is over I suppose. I hope A. will always realize how I sacrificed it for his sake. I suppose every woman makes the great sacrifice when she gets married. As the saying is, it is the woman which pays and pays and pays.

Sept. 18: Saw Mr. Martin for the first time today. He told me in his serious way I had made a mistake, for if I had of done what he wanted I would have had so much publicity I would have had all the parts I wanted. Of course it is very wonderful to think a serious man like he takes such an interest in one. He said he felt awful that I did not trust him and looked so serious and sad.

Sept. 19: Have decided not to go to Escanaba. Just wired A. I will accept his ticket-money as a present for he certainly owes me something for all I have been through. Am staying in Hollywood for the sake of my career, as Mr. Martin thinks I would be very foolish not to. What does a small town boy like Avery know about careers anyway?

THE FIDDLE STRING

(Continued from page 31)

husband, who swung blissfully unconscious over the pit of hell. Checks for money, money for checks, as the old Broadway slogan read.

The woman remained seated, her face suddenly becoming haggard. She sat perfectly still, without gestures. Not a friend she could go to in confidence. If she did not give up her pearls, she would lose both her husband and her son. For by those letters the court might read that she was not a fitting person to care for a child. Little Bobby—his soft rosy face hidden against her throat—Dear God—just because she had been foolish, not wicked!

She got herself to her feet. She wondered if she could get to the lift without swaying. Suddenly she exerted herself, lifted her ebbing will to flood, and resolutely left the room.

"What a handsome woman!" she heard some one say.

"She has a beautiful little boy—"

In the lift she leaned against the side and closed her eyes. When the lift stopped, she did not stir.

"Madame?" said the lift-boy, respectfully touching her sleeve.

"Pardon me!" she said.

Little Bobby, with his cool face pressed against her throat!

AT three in the afternoon Moran hired a cab and was driven over to the Luxembourg gardens. The sky was blue and the air mild. There were hundreds of nurseries and children. Baby carriages were everywhere, dolls and sail-boats and toy balloons. First, Moran watched the boats in the fountain. Occasionally a shift in the breeze sent the spray over the boys, and there were shouts and scurrying. Kids, thought Moran. He liked to watch them at play—they were so full of novel inventions. One of the lads

had a submarine which, half submerged, bored sinisterly down upon the noble sloops and frigates. Shrieks of excitement rose whenever there was a contact.

There was a mischievous streak in Moran. He could hardly resist putting the end of his cigarette against the fat balloon which bobbed against his shoulder. He looked down, and received a slight shock. It was the Wardlaw boy, and next to him, her hand on his shoulder against his tumbling into the basin, was Bettina the nurse.

The rogue recognized the fact that he had come to the gardens because he had been bored, and here was a chance to dissipate his boredom. He had learned that Bettina spoke English. Slyly he maneuvered the cigarette. There was a sudden pop! and little Bobby glanced up with surprise, which quickly dissolved into an expression of deep hurt.

"Oh, I'm sorry!" cried Moran.

"It is nothing," said Bettina, who was also bored, and here was an attractive young man.

"Wait a minute," said the genial rogue. He ran over to the balloon stand and bought two balloons, returning quickly. "Here you are!"

Bobby accepted them, smiling. The nurse smiled, too, convinced that the first balloon had not been exploded accidentally. A flirtation? Eh, well!

"Thank the gentleman," said Bettina to the boy.

"Merci, monsieur," said Bobby, gravely.

"But you must spik in Ingliss!" commanded the nurse.

"Thank you, sir," Bobby was not shy, but reserved with strangers.

In the end the three of them crossed over to the row of iron chairs and sat. Bettina became voluble. Madame the boy's mother was the wife of a rich American. She was



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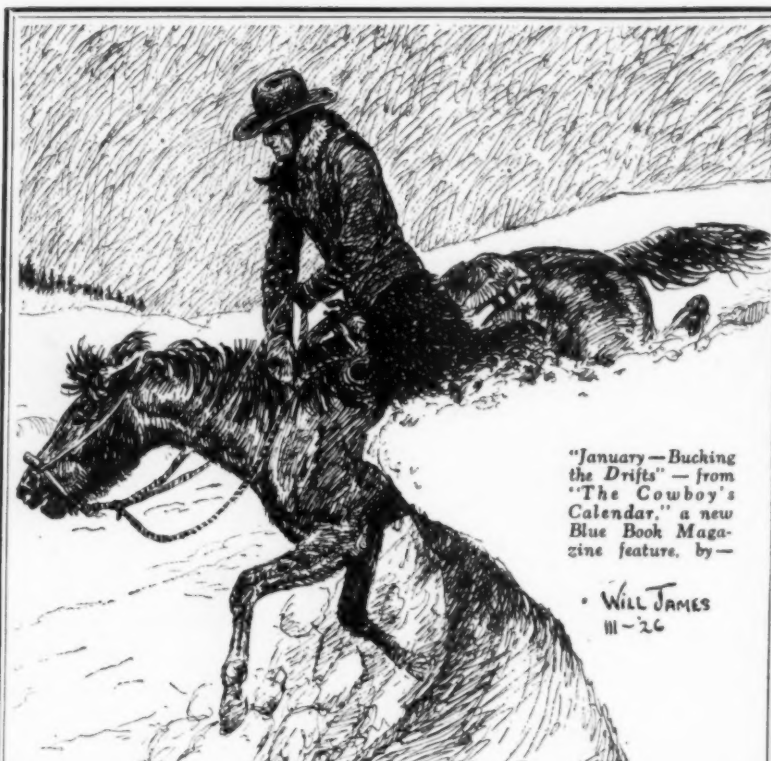
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very beautiful, and she moved in the high world.

Moran explained that he was over to see the races. He liked Paris; it was so gay and everybody was so friendly.

Bobby eyed his swinging balloons, solemnly. Mamma had told nurse never to speak to strange gentlemen, but she did sometimes. There was a policeman in New York—He felt himself being lifted to this strange man's knees. He gazed appealingly at Bettina, but she only smiled and nodded.

Moran was enjoying himself thoroughly. He possessed the instincts of the dramatist. This little boy on his knees, eh? Who might or might not go through life under a shadow. All depended upon which course the mother took. And he was riding the boy on his knees! If that wasn't drama, then there wasn't any such animal. He took out his card-case and extracted a card, chuckling inwardly.

"Give this card to the little boy's mother, and say for me that she has a most beautiful child."

"And some day he will be rich," said Bettina, putting the card in her bag.

Moran set the boy down, and Bobby rearranged his coat-sleeves and his collar. The deadly accurate instinct of the child! Bobby hadn't liked the feel of this strange man's hands; but being well-bred, he had not shown his dislike openly. "Never do anything to hurt people's feelings," his beautiful mother had once said.

The jackal tipped his hat and went his way, conjuring up the picture of Mrs. Wardlaw when she was informed that Donny Moran had dandled the boy on his knees. But God sometimes gives a trick to the unhappy. Bettina forgot all about the card until it was too late to matter.

He left the gardens for the nearest café and ordered a *boeuf*. He longed to cut into the grape, but he must hold himself on the leash until he had disposed of the pearls. Then—the Dead Rat, the Red Mill, the flashy night-rounds of Paris! It was a great world.

That night he went to the Opéra, where they were singing "Thais." The music, from time to time, stiffened his throat and brought tears to his eyes. The fiddle-string was humming. The emotional and the spiritual are different things. One is a whimper on the surface of life; the other is the deep mysterious tide which moves us to great and lasting deeds. Moran could not be urged to do a fine deed; but he could thrill and grow tearful over music and scenes. On a certain historic day in American history he had shouted himself hoarse for war; but as he was registered in neither the city directory nor the telephone book, he had remained in New York untouched by the dragnet of the draft. Sometimes he got himself into trouble by this emotional inebriation, did things for which he soundly cursed himself afterward. He considered it a fact that he was always being caught off his guard: when, truth is, none can forestall the emotional; we are all of us victims at one time or another. Even stones are emotional! They say—scientists—that a certain violin note can make the Woolworth tremble.

On the way back to the hotel he dropped a ten-franc note into a beggar's cap. It wasn't an act of charity. His emotions were still vibrating, and he had to find an additional outlet!

PRECISELY at the appointed time Moran entered the Crillon and presented his card to the head porter.

"Please send that up to Mrs. Wardlaw."

"Madame Wardlaw? Ah, but Madame left for Lourdes this morning."

Cold fury swept through Moran, and his eyes were not pleasant things to see. All right; she would have it so. He would

send the letters to the husband, and search the fields for new enterprises. Donny Moran never bluffed; when he sat down in a game of this sort, he always held the aces. He was turning away to capitalize his fury, when second thought stayed him.

"Where is this Lourdes—one of the water-drinking resorts?"

The porter's eyebrows went up. Not to know Lourdes!

"Lourdes is the city of miracles," the porter explained. "Sick people go there and are cured by having faith. Ah, the crippled! They carry crutches there and throw them away. Everybody prays in Lourdes."

"Where is it?" asked Moran, his fury evaporating.

"It is in the Pyrenees, and this is the time of year, monsieur, for the great pilgrimage."

"Prayers!" Moran understood perfectly. She had gone to Lourdes to pray for a miracle. He wanted to laugh. "How do you spell it?"

Patiently the porter pronounced the word and then wrote it.

"Thanks," said Moran, extending a ten-franc note.

Outside in the street he released his laughter. Prayers! All the while there had been in his mind a notion that she would make the attempt to pass imitation pearls to him. Indeed, he had been hoping she would try the trick, so that he could return the string, grinning; for no one knew pearls any better than Donny Moran. Lourdes—prayers! Why, the string was as good as his; but he would have to travel down to Lourdes to get it. Gone to pray for a miracle! Rich and priceless! That blue bowl up there—fat chance! All right. He would go to Lourdes and watch the miracle tumble out of nowhere. Prayers!

MORAN arrived in Lourdes toward evening, to encounter mountain mists through which dropped a fine drizzle. He was tired, hungry and travel-shaken. As he had not telegraphed for reservations at any of the hotels, he was obliged, for one hour, to tramp the narrow streets, which were greasy with mud. He was in an irritable frame of mind when, by chance, he found haven at the Hôtel Moderne. After a comfortable dinner and a pint of still wine, his irritability waned and his ironical outlook waxed.

The next thing on the program was to locate his quarry. Borrowing an umbrella, —a thing he hated,—he went the rounds of the hotels again. Shops—he had never seen so many; nearly every window was filled with crucifixes, Madonnas, strings of beads, post-cards. Occasionally there would be a grocery, protruding impudently halfway across the slim sidewalk. And everywhere the pilgrims, all in somber black, in styles that had come out of chests, heaven alone knew how ancient. Parade and counter-parade of bobbing umbrellas, which bumped continuously against the one Moran was carrying ill-temperedly; and often he was forced into the running gutters, so that his feet became wet. He muttered oaths frequently. Well, well—all these discomforts would be paid for shortly. . . .

Mrs. Wardlaw was weary to the point of inertia. She sat by the window and stared at the slanting rain so shot by the street-lamps that it resembled the pleasant tinsel on Bobby's last year's Christmas tree. Her fingers writhed. She had stood in the rain for two hours that afternoon, praying, praying; but she was conscious of having somehow failed to lift her faith above her doubts.

Folly! To have stood on the lip of the abyss for a moment—and to pay such a price! She hadn't loved poor Wendall; she now saw clearly that she had been restless, only that—wanting attention, the familiar little affairs of married life; flowers,

simple gifts, the swift unexpected caresses so necessary to all women who want their husbands always to be lovers. And what had really been his crime? That he had been in the city all day and wanted to stay in his home at night, forgetting the endless monotony on her side. The foolish hot pride that had refused to beg for what was hers by right! Amazing irony! Here was the truth: she had written those letters to her husband, indirectly. And yet that indescribable beast had her by the throat—unless there were miracles.

She had no sense of security. Sooner or later the jackal would find her. Why hadn't she asked Wendall to destroy her letters? He would have done so. He had been no casual tea-room acquaintance; she had known him for years—a gentleman and a thoroughbred, but thoughtless like herself, believing that she did not care for the man she had married. Her fault; Wendall had in no particular been to blame.

"GOOD night, Mamma!"

Bobby—to lose him! For that would be the penalty. She swept the little boy to her breast fiercely, smothering him with kisses.

"You—you hurt me, Mamma!" he gasped.

"I didn't mean to! I didn't mean to!"

She rocked with him.

"Mamma, you look as if you were going to cry."

"No, no! Everything is all right, Bobby dear. God is kind. Mamma is tired; that is all." She put the boy down. "Good night."

Bettina took him into the next room, wondering what had happened to her mistress. What could happen to her? Her husband loved her; her boy idolized her; she was rich. Yet she was visibly unhappy. Americans were odd!

At nine o'clock there came a knock on Mrs. Wardlaw's door. Knocks on the door now terrified her.

"Come in," she said, her throat dry.

A maid entered with a letter. Mrs. Wardlaw knew instantly who had written it. The jackal had found her. She could not decipher the thing for a moment; the lines seemed to crawl and writhe like little vipers.

"Why waste any more time? I am at the Hôtel Moderne, 103. Tomorrow afternoon at five you will enter my room, bringing the pearls. The letters will be given to you in exchange. If the letters are in my possession at six o'clock, they will take the first steamer out. And that's that."

She tore the note into bits, raised a window and flung them forth. The rain beat them into the gutter, now become a miniature torrent of mud and rain. She then knelt down at the side of the bed. God was not going to let this evil thing happen; He could not, for He was just. She loved her man, and wanted—wanted—him, more poignantly than anything else on earth, even more than Bobby; for if the man was hers, it would follow that the son would ever be. . . .

Meantime Moran sat in his stockinged feet and read a detective story until midnight. He liked thrills.

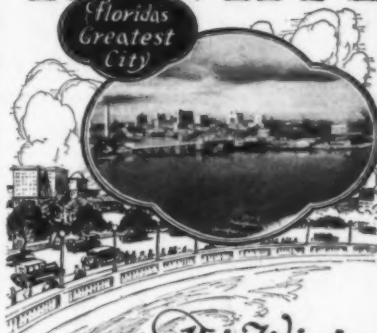
IT was ten o'clock when Moran awoke. The drizzle was still falling. Shredded mists floated across the housetops. He yawned and stretched. Queer thing: he would have given a hundred dollars for a game of Kelly pool. He was beginning to get homesick, but refused to confess it.

Sunshine—that would be a miracle in this part of the world. The city of boohs! All the hotels and the pensions filled to the rim, and everybody had everything, all the way from toothache to total paralysis. All right; he would buy a rubber coat and follow the procession. It struck him that this was the medium graft on a huge scale.

The first act, upon getting up, was to ex-

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IN THE FAMOUS RED BOX

amine the inside pocket of his coat. They were there, the letters. You never could tell. Mrs. Wardlaw might be cute enough to "tail" him with a "dick." That was the trouble over here; you had to carry the stuff on your person; you didn't dare leave it in your grip.

Ten o'clock. She wouldn't be going over to the Grotto until after lunch, so he had all the time in the world.

He began to chuckle softly. That would be one grand joke. He would send postals back to the bunch, and they'd all believe he'd gone "church." It would be a scream. So after breakfast he spent the balance of the morning in the writing-room. The gang would be up in the air until he returned to New York and gave them the grand laugh.

It is to be mentioned that beside the fiddle-string of emotion (which so often swept him off his feet) Moran had the usual assortment of crookdom's superstitions. He carried luck-pieces; he never tackled a job on Friday, never passed anyone on the left side while going up or down stairways, put on his left shoe first. These superstitions made up his religion, the only religion for which he had any respect.

The town of Lourdes was a joke to him; he could not get the notion out of his head that this miracle business was on a par with the old spirit-medium graft. He was not sacrilegious; he was simply unaware that

anything was sacred. There were some things he feared, as has been indicated, certain human beings and actions; but he had reverence for nothing. The emotional in him was something he never sought to analyze; consequently he never realized the abiding danger of it.

At two o'clock in the afternoon he sauntered up the hill to the Basilique. The drizzle had stopped, but the sky was still leaden, and mountain mists floated raggedly about. Moran had the reportorial sense; he wanted to know everything. Thus, when he started out upon his peculiar pilgrimage, he knew as much as the next one. But with him words seldom if ever drew pictures.

From all streets came informal processions, the objective point apparently the same as his. The wan white of the unlighted candles, swaying with the pulling steps, the dull black clothes, the monotony of which was here and there broken by white linen caps, the sad faces, the tense eyes—Moran became interested in a speculative way. The candle-maker was the boy for him; oodles and oodles of iron-men; something folks had to buy. The odor of tallow was so strong that it overbore the mountain air. Poor boobs—all of them come-ons and none of them wise to it! What a soft snap for Donny Moran if only he could speak French!

He hesitated a little before entering the Basilique. It was a church, and it might in some manner queer his game if he entered. But the hotel porter had told him that the Basilique was filled with gold; so he went in, doffing his hat. What he saw caused him to gasp. It seemed to him that he was looking upon all the gold in France, that here was the reason why the French Government issued brass and paper money. A billion—in a church, where it couldn't be got at!

This puzzled him too, the inviolability of this gold. The cleverest thief in Paris would hesitate here. Something funny about it. Even the Government dared not put its hand in here. He knew that Donny Moran wouldn't lay a finger on the stuff, not if he was the one human being within a mile of the place. Anywhere else!

All at once he became conscious of the fact that there weren't many people in the church. Where had the processions gone? He went outside and put on his hat. The procession was still in progress, winding around the Basilique. He swung into line. Evidently the miracles did not happen in the church. In a moment he found out where the procession was going.

Unexpectedly he came upon the strangest scene in all this world. He was standing on the rim of the hill. Down the side of this ran a zigzagging path, and along this angular path walked the pilgrims. Here and there was a dash of color—some priestly robe. Away below, on a bit of level ground between the hill and the Gave, a gay mountain stream, emerald green, were more than a thousand people, in wheelchairs and on stretchers. Except for the rollicking river, except for those winding down the path, there was no movement; that below might have been a picture in stone. Suddenly the arms of those in the chairs went out horizontally and those on the stretchers perpendicularly.

Moran fell into line, gripped—but unsuspected by him—by a kind of hypnosis. From where he was he could not tell what this business down below signified, whatever it was, there was something tremendous about it. Slow work it was, in getting down; it was a kind of dead march. From time to time his hand strayed automatically to the bulge in his coat—the letters.

Upon the air came an incomparable sound, like none Moran had ever heard before. Evidently the sound had come from the occupants of the chairs and stretchers. Prayers! He could laugh at the notion of prayer, from an individual; but from more than a thousand, all at once! He began to swallow, to feel a bit depressed and uneasy, sorry that he had joined the procession. He wanted to break out of the line, but Fate was ironically fingering the fiddle-string; so Moran found himself surrendering to the invisible force.

Something bothered him; he could not tell exactly what: It wasn't Friday; he had his luck-piece; he had put on his left shoe first. Still, something warned him that he was doing a risky thing—getting mixed up with religion like this. He had always side-stepped religion; no money in it. Besides, it was bad luck; it was traditional that one could not fool around a church without muffing some of the fine points of the game one was playing.

PRESENTLY he saw the whole picture: the crippled and bedridden appealing to the Almighty for a miracle. Moran's throat became stuffy. His uneasiness became fear. A thousand rosaries trembling. He wanted to escape, but now he saw that he had lost the opportunity. The pressure behind was no longer figurative but actual. He saw the bareheaded priest in the pulpit. Next to the pulpit, on the far side, yawned the blackened mouth of the Grotto. A thousand crutches hung there like brown stalactites. Guarding the pulpit was a little white picket fence, strangely festooned with beads and flowers, and bridal veils! Moran saw the faces of the helpless pilgrims: tense, sad, thin, old, young, and all of them marked with patient ecstasy, the last stand of Hope.

Of what followed, Moran had no distinct recollection. His will floated; he could not induce it to act for him. Only one impulse

WILLIAM MCFEE

Mr. McFee has been cruising around Central America again, but this time as a passenger and not a ship's engineer as heretofore. The results will begin to appear shortly in a new group of stories he is doing for this magazine. The first will appear in an early issue, entitled:

"AT THE VILLA AGOSTINO"

could he recall: the need of getting away from this place, miles and miles away. Irresistibly he was being forced toward the entrance to the Grotto, only a step at a time, and a slow step. These things struck his eye superficially, did not register: the Grotto, its ceiling velvet-black from the fatty smoke of millions of candles, hundreds of which were now burning at the feet of the famed Virgin—a moon-ray in the black of night, her placid face free of all human emotion; something that looked like a Roman bathtub into which the pilgrims were dropping objects, a receptacle filled with cards, letters, trinkets, war crosses, bridal wreaths, all henceforth inviolable to layman touch. . . . When Moran got outside again, the drizzle began to fall once more; but he stood bareheaded, unmindful of the cold touch, dazed and bewildered.

MRS. WARDLAW, three paces behind him, looking over the bent head of the cripple next in front of her, had been witness to the act, to her utterly incomprehensible. Step by step she was pressed forward until she came abreast of the receptacle. There they were, forever inviolable—her letters! A flash of vertigo blurred her vision. She was forced on to the exit, nevertheless. But in the open she became alive to the need of leaving Lourdes at once, with Bobby and Bettina; for she doubted not that the reaction would be fierce and relentless.

Free! In some inscrutable manner, God had relented, revealing to her alone a miracle. The relief affected her like some heady wine; and hysterical laughter bubbled in her throat but got no farther. How she reached the hotel she never actually knew: on foot evidently, for her shoes were wet and muddy,

her skirts bedraggled. Her man, her boy, her home—all hers again!

For Moran there was one hope left: that she would come at five with the pearls. So he threshed about the room, smoking innumerable cigarettes, while his envenomed fury rose steadily until his whole body seemed to expand, viperously. There was a candle on the dresser. Snatching it out of the stick, he broke the tallow into bits and ground them under his boot-heels. Donny Moran, the hard-boiled, became the boob of boobs! Something to rend, tear, bruise—to catch her by the wrist and make her cry! If she hadn't run away to this crazy place—

He glanced at his watch: it was a quarter to five. He sat down, straining his ears. Five o'clock came, a quarter after five, the half-hour. He heard the scream of a railway whistle. Six o'clock.

He was done. His mind, now clear of befuddlement, caught the truth. She had been witness to his act. He couldn't remember anything save that when he stood outside the Grotto, the letters were no longer in his pocket. A wild notion sprang into his head to recover the letters that night. The Grotto might be locked and guarded but these probabilities would not have deterred him. Superstition! He stood once more within the trembling circle. Fear that what had happened today might happen tomorrow, magnified a hundred diameters.

Why hadn't he thought to put the letters in the hotel safe?

His collar began to choke him. He tore it off, and the tie, and flung them upon the dresser. Suddenly he saw his reflection in the mirror. He leaned upon the dresser, stared for a moment, then snarled:

"You—damn!—boob!"

LITTLE SISTER OF THE BRIDGE

(Continued from page 47)

Coralie noticed that Sue dropped her eyes and colored a little. Precious Sue!

"I may be in New York on that date," Coralie said, "but if not, I'm going with Aunt Minnie's new in-law, Archie Colton. Did you know him when he was here?"

"I seem to remember him," Wheeler returned. "He was a little after my day, wasn't he?"

"A little," assented Coralie.

"I wish I could dance," Wheeler repeated. "I really must learn, one of these days."

He had been saying that on an average of once a month since a year after the death of his wife, Coralie reflected. Sue winked and said saucily:

"It will keep your weight down, Marston, and keep you young, and then you can practice on your little girls."

Wheeler smiled thinly. He did not like Sue, and very much longed to be secure enough with Coralie to point out to her Sue's deficiencies.

"People like you keep me young," he returned; "I don't feel a day over twenty-five."

"Wouldn't it be fun," Coralie said hastily, forestalling some cheeky remark from Sue, "if we could be stamped with the age of our feelings rather than the age of our bodies?"

"In that case, we'd shift back and forth between wrinkles and smooth skins, and bald heads and heavy crops of hair," Wheeler said. "No, I'm content to let things be as they are."

Later on, when he and Coralie were alone in the living-room, he harked back to that remark of his—Wheeler had a way of considering that his utterances were important. In the sense that he always meant them, they were.

"You remember, Coralie," he said, "that at dinner I implied that I didn't mind it if

people showed that they were growing older?"

"Umph," said Coralie absently. She was listening to the shrieks of laughter coming from the library, where Sue was practicing the Charleston with three young men. Coralie would have liked to be with them, being frivolous, not listening to Wheeler paving the way for his sixth proposal—or was it the seventh?

"I mean that," Wheeler said earnestly, "when I care about people, I remember them as they were when I first met them. To me you look as you did when you were eighteen, and to me you will always so look."

"That's sweet of you," murmured Coralie, rather touched, but put off a little by the ponderousness of his phrase "so look." How could one ever consider marrying a man if one were so critical, she wondered. But perhaps when one decided, one forgot the little deficiencies, remembering deficiencies of one's own.

"Of course, I don't mean children," went on Wheeler. "My own three girls have given me a long gallery of pictures to remember."

"They're so pretty," said Coralie, still absently. The laughter from the library had an enticing sound.

"Yes, they are," agreed Wheeler; "the eldest is exactly like her mother in face and character."

For several minutes he expounded the virtues of his daughters, not, however, again alluding to their mother. But he would always remember her, Coralie mused, and of course, he had a right to. Indeed, he would be ungrateful if he didn't. But then, why should a beautiful fresh girl have to accept only part of the life of an experienced man? There would be too many memories they would not have in common. Let some unattractive girl take such a lot as that. Not

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THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE'S SCHOOL SECTION

MISCELLANEOUS—CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

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The Director, Department of Education
THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE
33 West 42nd Street, New York City

Coralie Waldon—unless, of course, she were driven to it.

NEXT evening Coralie reached her aunt's house well before dinner-time. Archie Colton, she knew, had arrived that afternoon. She had dressed carefully, mindful of the fact that his standard of comparison had been formed from long experience with smart, pretty New York girls. She wore a dress of silver and blue; a fillet of silver held her abundant blue-black hair, and long rhinestone earrings fell halfway to her shoulders. At the precise moment when she heard his steps in the upper hall, she stood in profile beside the fireplace, arranging a spray of roses that sprang from a tall silver vase. Sheathed in silver and blue, with the scarlet of the flame behind her, she was a vision to quicken the pulses of an anchorite. The young man, hurrying down the stairs toward her, was anything but that.

Coralie turned and gave him her full face, rather eager to know what difference the years had made in him. She saw a tall little man, with a sort of golden skin, and strange eyes, green and hazel and gold, eyes that beckoned and demanded. His mouth was at once firm and mocking, a dangerous combination. He came toward her with the look of half-concealed admiration to which Coralie was so well accustomed, and which was dearer and more necessary to her than the breath of her nostrils. Just in the time it took for him to approach from the foot of the stairs, her recent mood of humility died. She was again the proud beauty, sure of conquering forever her world.

"How glad I am to see you again!" said Colton, his hand outstretched.

"You never saw me before," laughed Coralie, liking his strong clasp.

He accepted the correction.

"Either you were still in grammar school when I was here, or if you were in high school, I was blind. But now I see."

Mrs. Swayne, coming in then, wondered for the thousandth time why it was that young people nowadays so soon struck the personal note. She was sure that before the evening was over Colton and Coralie would be calling each other by their given names.

For all that she accepted admiration as her due tribute, Coralie was able to estimate its degrees. Before the dinner was over, she divined that Colton was unusually attracted toward her. He made the fact public to the Swaynes by inviting himself to remain with them for a week instead of for the week-end. Mrs. Swayne reflected that in her day such an arrangement would have been as good as a proposal, but in these modern days it meant that the young people were merely trying each other out.

To give Colton the benefit of competition, Mrs. Swayne had invited Wheeler and Dorrance to be of the bridge-party; a married couple, with her husband and herself, gave Coralie the advantage of shining before five men. And shine she did; she had never been lovelier. Colton's admiration became more marked; Wheeler became gloomy as the evening wore on, and Dorrance became exceedingly debonair.

At one moment during the evening, when she and Dorrance, as partners, were progressing to the other table, Coralie murmured:

"I'm going to need somebody to take me home. Will it be you, Dick?"

"I think not, my dear," he said lightly. "Not?" she cried, amazed. "Why, Dick!"

"Thanks for favors gracefully offered, and skillfully apportioned," he said, "but I'm not having any this evening."

Later Coralie repeated her wheedling invitation to Wheeler, who accepted, with a palpable lightening of his gloom. Since he had been married, Coralie thought, he ought to have understood that she was

fastening on him in order that she might be able to withhold something from Colton.

When the party broke up, she saw Colton's disappointment that he was not to see her home. The fact that he did not attempt to conceal it gave her a thrill of triumph. Coralie Waldon was not yet on the toboggan, she told herself; all Coralie needed was wider worlds to conquer, such as New York.

When she was shaking hands with Dorrance, he said in a peculiar tone: "Good-by, Coralie."

As she looked into his face, she saw that his debonair expression had vanished. He was grave, a little old.

"Why not 'Au revoir'?" she murmured.

"Good-by, Coralie," he repeated with the same note of intention.

She was preoccupied as she drove away with Wheeler. She did not become alert till he was in the midst of his seventh proposal—or was it the eighth?

"Oh, Marston," she said plaintively, "why do you spoil a perfectly good friendship?"

"Because it isn't a perfectly good friendship," he said. "You know I am devoted to you, and that if I can't have you for my wife, I don't want you as a friend; couldn't stand it."

She responded to the pain in his voice.

"I just don't want to hurt you," she said. "You will find some other girl—"

"I suppose that seems a natural thing to say to any man, especially to a widower," Wheeler said, "but I'm not looking for a housekeeper and a mother to my children, Coralie. I have a competent housekeeper, and I'm a pretty good combination of father and mother to my little girls. I—I adore you, dear."

CORALIE felt like weeping. Oh, why must he propose, tonight of all nights!

"Because I love you, I want to protect you," he said, in a jealous voice. "I saw how you were interested in this man from New York, this Colton. Can't you see, Coralie, that he would only hurt you, that he is a philanderer? He is, for a man, almost as outstanding as you are for a girl. Women wouldn't let him alone, and he wouldn't want to be let alone."

"What nonsense!" said Coralie irritably. "I only met him tonight. You go too fast. Do you think every man is in love with me because you are?"

"No, but I recognize the type that calls to you," he said. "I'm older than you and I've knocked about the world a lot. The kind you are drawn to is the unreliable type, Coralie. I wouldn't talk this way about some of the other men in love with you—"

She was silent, still irritated, but perturbed too. Of course, women wouldn't let Colton alone. But did he extend his visits for the sake of every pretty girl he met? She knew that he was unusually interested in her. But Wheeler was looking too far into the future.

"I take it," Wheeler sighed, "that you aren't going to pay any attention to me. Well, Coralie, I'll wait. I'll ask you again in a few months. Time is all I have on my side, it seems."

Coralie felt a sudden drawing toward him, a warmth of sympathy. He was devoted to her, and he would never give her a minute's anxiety; he was just the solid, dependable sort of husband a woman should be proud to have. Husband, yes—but as a lover—

"Then I won't make this a final refusal," she said. "I can't promise anything, Marston, and yet somehow I do feel as if my matrimonial future will be decided within the next few months. I am going to New York to get a job. Perhaps before this time next year, I'll be settled in life."

"I've been waiting for you for three years," Wheeler said; "I can wait another."

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DURING the next few days Coralie experienced emotions new to her. She had played at love, but she had never been really in love. She had been attracted, but she had never been carried away. Always she had been able to gauge the sincerity and depth of the feeling she was able without effort to inspire in men. But from the beginning Colton attracted her as no other man had ever done. Her heart beat queerly when he came near; her vision grew unsteady. Further, she was unable to estimate how much he cared for her. Her temper and nerves were uncertain.

"What's the matter with you?" queried young Sue. "Getting dizzy in the head over that movie beauty Archie Colton? Don't! I'm going to marry a plain man, myself. I want the best portions of the steak myself for dinner, and the top of the milk bottle."

Coralie began to weep, upon which Sue comforted her, remarking:

"You girls of the vintage of 1900 certainly do have hearts for the men to peck at. Don't you know a heart is a rotten investment till you're safely married—and not much good even then?"

Looking backward, Coralie never could remember her changing states of mind during Colton's two-weeks' visit. All she did know was a sense of immense relief when he proposed to her, telling her that she was the first girl he had ever asked to marry him—a sense of relief and of happiness. She was engaged to the handsomest and most charming man she had ever seen. He had money and a certain position; and he would take her to live in New York. No more uncertainties, no more dependence on young students or on old married couples, with bridge instead of lovemaking as the objective. No more older-girl troubles. She was going to be of the married elect who, socially speaking, are more or less ageless.

Colton went back to New York bearing Coralie's promise that she would come and visit his mother. His mother's letter of invitation came promptly, followed by a barrage of letters and telegrams from Colton. In late February, Coralie set out for New York, wondering if she would ever return. But as the train drew away from the station, she looked out at the snowy hills that surrounded her home, tracing the lines of the gorges, the belts of the pine trees, and she felt a certain thrill of premonitory homesickness. Her life had always been safe and happy; and New York, or any other city, was a trackless jungle.

CORALIE had often gone to New York on shopping expeditions. She had enjoyed walking down Fifth Avenue, secure in the consciousness that no one was better dressed than she, and that her beauty was as authentic as any that New York could produce. But she had always gone more or less as a tourist. Now, as the fiancée of Archie Colton, she was plunged into many complicated social relationships. His mother received her with warmth, and presently showed her real affection. Colton was so proud of her that he was naïve in his manifestations. Colton's girl friends, over their gushing greetings, looked at her with critical, jealous eyes. She had taken away a prize, and she must pay. She would have prejudice and jealousy to surmount. Colton's men friends admired her almost as freely as he did.

They made love to her, too. Coralie did not quite like that. She had made plenty of love herself, but not to anyone's fiancée. Besides, the love she had made or that had been made to her had been delicate, fanciful, not at all crude. In New York there was something almost brutal about the directness with which men paid her compliments, tried to hold her hands, tried to kiss her.

"Sue would say," she reflected, "that these men have to work fast, like a burglar, because I'll be married and out of their reach before the summer."

But not out of their reach, either, she mused, as her month's visit was prolonged; the married people Colton knew seemed to overlook their bonds as soon as there was a good chance of philandering.

She was dining one night with a large party at a restaurant. They were to go on presently to a dance. Beside Coralie sat one Anderson, a married man in the late thirties. He had paid Coralie many florid compliments. His wife, sitting opposite, must have heard some of them. Presently he asked her to lunch with him.

"Thursday," he whispered, "—that's the day my wife always goes down to Long Island to see her mother."

"I'll be delighted to lunch with you and Mrs. Anderson any day but Thursday," said Coralie clearly.

LATER, in the dressing-room, Mrs. Anderson helped her on with her cloak.

"I want to thank you," she whispered, "for not lurching alone with my husband. I think you are about the only woman who ever refused his Thursday invitations."

Her eyes were full of tears. Coralie looked at her in pained silence.

"It's dreadful to be married to an attractive man," murmured Mrs. Anderson. "They're all alike. You're lucky to live in a little town where a woman can have her own husband to herself. She's got to, I suppose, or the neighbors would talk. When Archie has made fun of your dear little Creston, where no one dares to make love to his neighbor's wife, I have envied the women of Creston. New York is horrible. A man can do anything, and no one will ever find it out. It oughtn't to be that a woman can find comfort only in her children, and not in her husband."

Coralie kept murmuring: "I'm so sorry—I'm so sorry." She helped Mrs. Anderson efface the traces of her tears, and then she went on to the dance, her feet heavy, her heart heavy. She asked Colton to come away early and take her driving in the Park. Under the lambent air and the clear stars, she told him her perplexities.

"Your friends make love to me," she said, "although they know I am engaged to you. Is it that you don't know they're doing it, Archie, or that you don't mind?"

"Depends on how far they go," he said, "and I know you'll see they don't go too far. If you weren't in love with me, darling, I should mind. But your heart is all mine—isn't it?"

There was an interlude during which they did not speak. Presently Coralie remembered a question she must ask Colton.

"But you," she said, "you don't really want to make love to your neighbor's wife, do you? Not while you have me?"

"No," he returned vigorously; "I only love you, and I have never loved anyone but you, and I never expect to. At the same time—"

"At the same time—what?" said Coralie, stiffening.

"At the same time," he said slowly, "I have to pay a few compliments to other women."

"Make love, do you mean?" asked Coralie crisply.

"Not what I call love," he said decisively. "Good heavens, Coralie, you're not going to be a little girl from the country, are you? You don't object to my dancing with other girls. Of course not. When I dance, I put my arm around them, sometimes touch their cheeks. If I kiss a girl's cheek carelessly, it doesn't mean a thing more than if I touch her sleeve with my thumb. It's an age of more familiar technique. But the test of real love, darling, is this: where does a man spend his time?"

I want to spend mine with you forever and ever. No one else matters."

Coralie parted with him that night soothed, happy, thinking that perhaps she would marry him after all—in May, rather than in June. But in the middle of the night she awakened with a certain sense of perturbation. She didn't like this new technique of which Colton had spoken. Certainly, she had kissed men, but she didn't expect to any more. Above all, she didn't want her Archie kissing other women. Some day she would be older. Archie would not see her, as Wheeler did, perpetually eighteen. Could it be that some day he would kiss a young girl's cheek with more enthusiasm than he kissed his wife's lips? Could it be, too, that she did not entirely trust her Archie? No, not that. She wasn't sure she could trust any man so handsome and so sought after as he was. Mrs. Anderson's tears—oh, it was terrible to be in love, really in love. But was she? If she were, would she not be ready to let Archie's kisses go anywhere, so that he were happy? No; she wasn't noble in that way. She had been a spoiled beauty too long to know how to be meek and nonresistant.

AT the end of six weeks Coralie went home. Her little city seemed cramped after New York. Spring had been promising in New York, and up and down Fifth Avenue, flower-vendors stood on the corners, their trays heaped with violets and lilies-of-the-valley. But at home the snow still lay in the hollows and on the hills, and the air was raw and chill. Sue and her father warmed her with their welcome, and Mrs. Swayne was eager to hear of her New York triumphs.

"I suppose life here will seem very tame to you," sighed Mrs. Swayne, when Coralie had finished a tally that seemed to herself to savor of sameness. "I suppose you'll miss New York dreadfully?"

"I'll miss Archie dreadfully, of course," said Coralie. "But I'll be glad of a brief rest. I don't wonder that New Yorkers take long summer vacations when they can, and ultimately live in the suburbs. It's a dreadful strain the way they keep it up."

If Coralie had been a trifle fatigued during her feverish progress in New York, she lost sight of the fact in retrospect as she recounted her experiences to her friends. As she talked of Colton and all he had done for her, she had a swelling sense of good fortune. To herself as well as to her friends she was the favored of the gods in her past, present and future.

After a day or two her stories were all told, her friends went about their own concerns, and she had time to discover how very much she missed Colton. The time she had formerly spent with Dorrance and Wheeler and other men she used in writing to Colton. She never seemed to lack material. Colton's replies, though ardent, were brief. She found herself wondering a good deal where he went, with whom he spent his hours of play. Into her longing for him came a certain unrest, a dissatisfaction which she assumed to be the unsettled feeling which besets many engaged girls, and which wedding bells are supposed to dissipate. There were times when he scarcely seemed actual at all, when she wondered if her relation to him was not a dream. Again, he seemed so poignantly real that she could scarcely bear the waiting.

Shortly after Easter he came to Creston. She thought it was the most wonderful moment in her life when she stood in the doorway of the Waldon house and watched him springing up the steps, his eyes, his spirit, eliminating the little space that was between them. She had a swooning sense of happiness when he held her in his arms and murmured that the time had been too long. Then, very suddenly, the world claimed

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them. There were engagement dinners, teas and dances, at some of which Wheeler and Dorrance appeared, Wheeler palpably regretful, Dorrance gay and apparently rejoicing in Colton's good fortune. It seemed to Coralie that in all the weeks she had known Colton, she had seen little of him except in the company of other people. She reflected that they had talked little of anything but love. She did not know as much of his tastes as she did of those of Wheeler and Dorrance. But when she expressed this to him, he said that they had a lifetime in which to study each other, and that the more they had left to learn, the longer their mysteries would last.

The end of Colton's visit came suddenly. Coralie had been lying down one afternoon, while Colton and Sue took a walk. Hearing them come in, she went downstairs, tracing them by their murmured voices, to the library. They were sitting at either end of the couch. Sue's bobbed hair was tumbled; her face was steady and cold. Colton wore a teasing superior expression, which changed as Coralie entered.

"What is it?" Coralie asked easily. "Have you two been quarreling?"

She had no premonition that the moment was vital for her.

"Yes, little sister has been saucy," Colton said.

Sue rose, and looked at her sister consideringly.

"I care for you more than anyone else in the world," she said slowly, "but I'm going to take the risk of making you hate me. Some day, maybe your sense of justice will come back and you'll not hate me. I don't know. But I've got to risk it."

COLTON grasped her wrist roughly.

"Sue, don't be a fool!" he said warningly. "What are you talking about?"

"You and Coralie," Sue said steadily. "Coralie, dear, before you came in, Archie was kissing me. I don't suppose you'd mind a sisterly kiss or two. I hope not. The difficulty is that the last few kisses Archie gave me were not brotherly. I didn't want them, because you're my sister. I told him that after the first kiss, but there were some more. Now, there are girls that wouldn't mind an engaged man behaving that way. There are others that would wonder how he would act after he was married, if, after a few weeks' engagement, he could be giving lovely kisses to another girl. You are—as I told you—of the vintage of 1900, and you want to own your own man. I thought I'd tell you."

Sue left the room, and Coralie and Colton faced each other. He drew her into his arms. "What if I did lose my head for a minute?" he murmured. "You know I don't love anyone but you, wouldn't want to marry anyone but you."

In spite of Sue's accusation that she was old-fashioned, Coralie very much wanted to be modern. She knew that no one can be sure that love and loyalty will last forever; one can only promise to keep the contract. She wanted to laugh at Sue and to laugh with Colton, but every fiber of her spirit was bruised. She didn't want Colton to make love to anyone else, even in the most superficial way. She wept in his arms, and even while he soothed her, the misery she felt increased. Could she ever trust him? Was her life to be like that of Mrs. Anderson?

She slept little during the night, weeping and thinking, and gradually a hard core of resolution developed. If she found Colton alluring, so would other women; the day would come when she would be an old story to him and other women eternally new. She could not compromise; she didn't want any other woman to claim her man. She didn't even want business to claim him, too exclusively. He had to be hers. The

faithful type of man, so far, had not appealed to her. The one who did attract her she could not depend on. Very well; still she would not compromise. She would never marry.

WHAT she did do, after many painful scenes, was send Colton away with the engagement definitely broken. Sue and her father made many sacrifices of their own plans and money and sent her abroad with a sight-seeing party. During the spring and the summer she moved listlessly through art-galleries and churches, up and down mountains and along streets, feeling sometimes a thrill of pleasure or wonder at a touch of beauty, but mostly sadly absorbed in her grief, though at the same time not unaware that mournfulness became her.

In September, on the day before she was to sail for home, she sat by the pond in the Luxembourg gardens, watching bare-legged vocative French children sailing boats, and running up and down the paths with balloons. For the first time she felt both humble and at peace. She regretted that she had let her father and Sue do so much for her. She told herself with, for the first time, real conviction, that she was a spoiled beauty; that life had given her a great deal, and she had no right to expect everything.

"Everything" would have been Colton, charming, unphilandering, blind to all charms but hers, an eternal lover. In short, she sighed, an impossibility! He was gone; she did not want him back. She had loved him, and had most painfully made of him a memory which she wanted to thrust away. Her love for him had been real, but it had been based on selfishness, as had his love for her. Neither of them had been willing to make any real sacrifices for the other. They had, by parting, escaped being another Mr. and Mrs. Anderson. As for Coralie, she would go home and be a little sister of the bridge.

The gay calls of the children mingled pleasantly with the blue sky and water, the radiance of the flowers, the hint of change-fulness in the trees. A beautiful world, really, Coralie thought, and full of happiness, even for her—somewhere. Happiness and duties, too; when she returned home, she would try to be as good as if she were plain. She turned to follow the flight of a vivid bird that soared and sang. When she looked back—Dorrance stood before her.

HE was not debonair, or gay. He quite looked his forty years. He had the anxiety of a man in love with a woman much younger than himself. But he did love her; nothing had changed him toward her. He had crossed the water to sit down beside her silently and be to her whatever she wished. There was a lump in Coralie's throat as she gave him her hands. Even as she looked at him welcomingly, little unworthy thoughts wriggled through her mind. With a husband so much older, she wouldn't have to be as good as if she were plain. She would have the advantage of him as Colton would have had the advantage of her. Dorrance, she was sure, would never see any other woman but her. When he had been young, he had been as Archie Colton, but not now. Here was the faithful husband who would never make of her a Mrs. Anderson.

But immediately those thoughts fled, and she forgot that she had ever had them. She began to take on protective coloring. How handsome Dorrance was—quite as good-looking as Colton! He didn't really look his age, and she would call back his first youth. Of course, she wasn't in love with him as she had been with Colton, but then—his devotion deserved a reward. He was a dear. Easily and rapidly she put herself into the mood to confer and receive happiness, her hand in Dorrance's hand, her eyes meltingly on his. Coralie and Nature raced together swiftly to the end.

WHY THE FLYING FISH FLEW

(Continued from page 73)

*Flying fish, beat it to Rangoon,
Beat it to far Mandalay.
Loving's my game; it is my middle name—
Tell her I'm coming home to stay.
Nobody's home in Manhattan;
Nobody kisses like you.
On terra firma there's no place like
Burma—
That's why the flying fish,
Fast little flying fish,
Fleet, flapping flying fish flew.*

In Tin Pan Alley they boast that Desher & Harkstein cleared three hundred thousand, net, off the ditty. From the way it ravaged the town, the story may be true. At all events, the waltz jingle had made the star take active interest in Mona Halligan.

"She's a nice chicken, Cyril," Miss DeLacy said to her husband, pondering new stage business over their late supper at Trittori's. "Bootleg bubbles and Johnnies at the stage door aren't really what she's thinking about. Gert Montmorency tells me she lives with her own folks, over on the East Side somewhere. A red-headed kid brother takes her home every night."

"Why not?" asked Cyril Blount. "That's what red-headed kid brothers are for. What do you say, Belle, to trying the ambers from behind, with the foots off, in the last encore?"

MISS DeLACY declined to be swerved from canape of caviare and pet pony. "But lately, Cyril," she continued, "lately I've got wise that it's the Speed-boy who's been upholstering her share of Number Six dressing-room with orchids."

"Battersby?" said the Jollity stage manager. "He's not so bad. He's broken all the blowing records there are, and hasn't blown himself—yet. He's a decent sort of young ass. If he didn't carry an extra-long war grouch, he might be useful to somebody. Jake Minger was talking yesterday about getting him to back the new road company for the Coast—only Jake wants to see all the money in the bank. He's nuts on the 'in escrow' thing; says everyone's waiting for Battersby to go broke. The time limit expired long ago."

"Let him," agreed the star. "Snap-snap! What care we?" She twiddled thumb and middle finger, smiling at the pink-cheeked man whom she idolized. "But when the Speed-boy's roll is shredded, I don't want my prize pony's heart busted too."

If either young Battersby or the Jollity broiler—or both—had been prone to diagnose poetic justice, opportunity knocked when the Speed-boy paid his first visit to the Halligan flat in Tompkins Square. It was a Sunday afternoon when the candy-sticked red-and-blue car drew up at the curb. The juvenile citizenry swarmed, to toot horn and dim newly washed varnish with grimy paws. A warm day; court windows were open, releasing in one merciless miasma, odor of many boiled dinners, pervasive wailing of infants, a medley of fire-escape gossip in soprano, the screech of installment talking-machines.

But the Speed-boy was stanch. He pushed the button labeled "Halligan," took boyish joy in fancying that the tremulous click of the catch which released the portal came from the usually firm fingers of Mona herself. This was an error; the door had been opened by the red-headed brother, Number 7176 upon the books of the Western Union branch office, at Forty-second Street and Sixth Avenue. Number 7176 went off duty about the time the curtain fell on the last act of the Jollity show; hence his regular sentry-go at the stage alley, to see that sister got safely home.

Battersby knew—Miss Halligan had told

him—that she had no mother. But he was not at all prepared to find, in her surviving parent, an old friend.

"My father, Mr. Battersby," the girl said, when she had taken from him, with sudden coloring, a huge box, blazoned "Gurley's." "Hullo!" cried Michael Halligan, while Mona and the ruby-polled messenger boy exchanged surprise.

"It's you, Mike?" cried the Speed-boy in turn.

Just because your favorite sub-rosa drink-dispenser knows you well enough to call you by your first name doesn't always mean that you are aware of his last one. Halligan had laid aside white apron when the liquor lid was banged, but he had not changed his occupation. He and Jack Battersby had invented three post-Prohibition cocktails in as many seasons.

It was easy enough for the two of them. Yet the diminutive broiler was inwardly discomposed as she arranged orchids and violets upon a plush-covered center table, carefully removing Gurley's generous knot of satin ribbon, lest it should be soiled. Mona Halligan loved her father, even more than her messenger brother. But she had disapproved of his vocation, always—even before white-faced Nora Halligan slipped away, five years earlier, grieving for her older son Terence, whom drink had broken and tossed to the bleary-eyed bow-wows.

"Your father's a fine man, and a kind man, Mona," her mother had whispered, at the end. "Kind men aren't any too plenty, girl; you'll find that out soon enough. I've always told him I'd rather have him truck-driving than tending bar. He wasn't to blame for the rum getting Terry. But you know, Mona darling, what a curse it has been to me."

Michael Halligan never touched liquor as a drinkable himself. To him, a rack of bottles was so much raw material, out of which he extorted his own meed of artistry. And no one had ever called the Speed-boy a "souse." The Jollity pony could rate, thus far, both men. Ironically enough, it disturbed her to find that they were old friends, although she could not have told you the exact reason.

When Battersby had vanished, Michael Halligan reached for his clay cutty, eyed the gorgeous cluster of flowers upon the plush table, and nodded.

"Everyone knows Battersby," said the sub-rosa bartender. "He's a fool with his roll; but as far as I know,—and I guess I do,—he's straight. And his talk's clean. Some day he'll be on his uppers, like the rest of 'em, I reckon. But you're a level-headed kid, Mona. I won't kick at motor-rides once in a while. Maybe, if your mother was here, she'd say I was wrong. As far as I'm concerned, he's welcome to come whenever he's a mind to."

Next Sunday morning Miss Halligan sat in the low roadster while it whizzed her to Blossom Tree Inn, where luncheon upon the veranda was awaiting, a luncheon carefully ordered the day before.

THE Speed-boy had been excessively proud of the freight the striped car carried. He had evolved nothing to drink. Mona never would touch anything; and to drink alone, with her watching, would have been raw, he felt. They talked of the show, and who would be taken from the Jollity chorus to have small bits in the new road company. Battersby could have named those who were going, for Jake Minger had decided to let him back the venture. He could have told her, also, that she had been denied the part of *Maisie Breeze* on tour because he wished to keep on watching her dancing behind Belle DeLacy. The Speed-boy could afford



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to be fastidious; he hated following a show through a Sahara of one-night stands. It had been rotten selfish; but he excused it by reflecting that he intended to marry Mona; he would make it up to her, with interest, afterward.

The Speed-boy really meant it.

Through it all, the occasional Saturday supper at Trittori's, Sunday luncheons at Blossom Tree, quiet motoring home from the Jollity after the final curtain, they were good pals, nothing more. The sentimental, even in jest—she had heard enough of the metallic echo of Broadway's brand to make her despise it—had been unspoken proscribed. The pennant chances of the Giants; this man Kipling, in whom the flying fish ditty had aroused reawakened interest; Cyril Blount's celerity in inventing new encore business; Jake Minger's impossible yellow ties—these were the primitive topics which held them enthralled.

The casserole circle, observing them with a trace of genuine envy, made clumsy jests about the Little Church Around the Corner. Belle DeLacy beamed on them; twice had she dragged Mona with her, shrinking but charming, when responding to the flying-fish cycle of recalls. The Jollity star had come to share Cyril's opinion that the Speed-boy was harmless.

BATTERSBY had learned, very speedily after he met Mona Halligan, that she was invisible on two afternoons out of her five matineeless ones. In vain did he hold out the lure of Blossom Tree Inn, or a box at the Polo Grounds, on a Tuesday or Thursday. He wondered often why she kept these periods inviolate. One night in early September she told him.

She had been more than elusive in word and glance that evening—an elusiveness which seemed to envelop her with deliberate aloofness, well-nigh a vague displeasure. It could not have been the supper; Armand in person had prepared the melted butter for her lobster, adding the requisite dash of Neapolitan pepper which Battersby had taught her to crave.

But the Speed-boy was sorely puzzled. So he gave the spender-legionary sign of distress to Armand; shortly thereafter a modest pint of Striped Seal in a crystal pitcher stood upon the table, flanked by a tray containing two empty ginger-ale bottles, stock "props" for saving the face of a cobbled Constitution. He was startled when she asked Armand's hovering aide to bring another glass; he was staggered when she allowed him to pour a modicum of the bubbles for her. It was some sort of omen, he knew. And instinct harassed him; it was likely to be a bad omen.

She held her beaker toward his own.

"I want you to drink a very special toast with me, Jack," she said.

"Sure," said the Speed-boy. "Here's to—what?"

"Just let's drink," she murmured, elusive eyes fixed upon some distant target. He sensed that, although her fingers were almost touching his, she was not at a Trittori table at all. Where was she?

He had drunk the unidentified toast with outward calm. But for the only time in the annals of Trittori's, a Battersby-signed *chit* revealed a nervous scrawl; the cashier eyed it, and then the empty pitcher. She too was puzzled. Less than a pint of Striped Seal could not have been responsible.

As the racing roadster entered Tompkins Square, the clock on the dashboard, a costly repeater motor timepiece, indicated that it was a bit after one. Mona Halligan roused herself from a reverie which had lasted since Forty-first Street.

"Let's talk for ten minutes on one of the park benches," she suggested.

Battersby nudged the car to the curb and lifted her out. They chose a spot screened

from the street-lamps, not too near the slumbering derelicts, cat-napping between visits of the neighborhood patrolman.

"It's about that toast—at Trit's," the pony dancer explained. "I've never touched anything to drink with you—before."

"I wondered about that, Mona."

"But tonight is a special occasion. You see—we were drinking to the man I am going to marry."

"But this isn't leap year, girl. And I hadn't intended to ask you again until next week."

The Jollity broiler did not misinterpret a tone which spelled *stab*; she marked, in the lamp-streak through arching, dusty park leaves, the Speed-boy's wry but gallant grin. It was hard not to be too sorry for him.

"You don't know him—yet," she finished. "He's a worker in the Dyker Street Settlement—you can see the cross, yonder."

She pointed toward the East River. Glowing, a dull yellow-red, hung the electric symbol of a Faith.

"You, Mona!" groaned the Speed-boy. "You aren't going to marry a preacher chap?"

"He's a lay worker—has the boys' classes on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons."

He knew now why Polo Grounds and Blossom Tree had not allured twice each week.

"I'd like you to meet him."

"I don't want to meet him," Battersby muttered. "I hope he chokes."

Small-boy stuff—and he knew it. Not the way a legionary of the Spender-brigade negotiated a facer. But Snapper Gellatly's waistcoat was feeling the pound of a suddenly jolted heart.

Mona Halligan stood up. He did not catalogue her Madonna look. But he did know that the broiler's face reminded him of a picture he had seen somewhere in a shop window. And being—as Mona's father had fathomed—a decent sort at bottom, he repeated.

"I didn't mean that," he said. "I'm not a piker. I can take medicine. I hope you'll be mighty happy. But girl, why couldn't you marry me? I'm no lay preacher, but I'm on the level."

"I tried hard to believe I could, Jack." She had truth in her voice. "I guess I'm a funny sort of chorus chicken—Belle DeLacy says so. But I couldn't grow up—grow old, I mean—just having a good time. And I am—very happy—Jack."

"You're going to pass up the Blossom Tree, and our table at Trit's? What will Armand say—what the deuce will everybody say?"

It was the nearest to a wail the Speed-boy had ever indulged in.

"It's very late," she said, gently.

HE walked with her across the square, past the drowsing driftwood, watched her produce latchkey and vanish. The opened door had contributed a familiar bouquet of mustiness and dead boiled dinner. From aloft came the inevitable scream of a fretful baby.

"And that's a Broadway broiler," he announced to the night. "That's what the goody-goody crowd yawns at over the footlights, and fancies is leading pure young men to perdition."

A dog-watch policeman was scribbling down the license number of the deserted striped automobile, before calling up the station house.

"All right, Officer—my car. I've just been seeing a friend home. Have a cigar—and for God's sake, let those park bums have their sleep out! You can forget your troubles when you're asleep."

What he handed to the patrolman, in addition to one of his pet humidior havanas, secured a night of immunity for the benchwarmers of Tompkins Square.

MONA HALLIGAN was wedded to her settlement chap the day of the six hundredth rendition of "The Mandalay Maid." The man she married does not need detailed description; he was not half so good-looking as either the Speed-boy or Cyril Blount—both of whom shared a pew, well front, with Belle DeLacy. But he was dead in earnest about Mona, recking little who noted it. Yes, he too was a spender, in his restricted way, thought Miss DeLacy, moist as to eyelash, watching the simple ceremony in a settlement chapel. But can you go on spending affection as recklessly as dollars, she reflected. There were many sorts of bankruptcy. Broadway possessed no patent on the phenomenon.

The red-headed messenger brother sniffled annoyingly throughout the proceedings. As for Michael Halligan, he kept marveling that his daughter could have passed up a clean good-things for that.

"But anyway, Nora would have been glad of it," he thought with resignation. "I figure it's for the best."

An astounding variety of face-powder and scent flavored the dank chapel atmosphere; cast and chorus of the Jollity were out in force. Even Jake Minger had sent six dozen solid spoons. Stimulating the fire-escape gossips that morning, three men from Gurley's had invaded the Halligan flat, banking it deep with the Speed-boy's offerings. Belle DeLacy vowed that even the tiny kitchen was filled with flowers. And the wedding breakfast was a riot, with Armand, and a selected Trittori squad, officiating. All of it had been done over Mona's protests; but these had been weakened by the hurt look in Jack Battersby's eyes.

When bride and bridegroom moved toward the striped car—with the rarely summoned chauffeur at the wheel—which was to take them to the West Shore station for beginning a three-day honeymoon in the Catskills, the ex-broiler whispered to her husband.

"You want mind?" Gert Montmorency heard her ask.

"Certainly not, my dear," the pale and slender bridegroom, in the too-loose cutaway coat, had answered.

So, before them all—this time it was the wife of Cyril Blount who was sniffing—Mona Rawlings, née Halligan, stood on tiptoe, threw her arms around the neck of the dazed Speed-boy, and kissed him full upon the lips.

WHAT occurred afterward piqued the Finnerlys, on the floor above, and scandalized the Grossmans, directly beneath. Neither family had been invited to the wedding reception—which was Jollity Theater exclusively, the Dyker Street lay worker having no relatives in town, and no friends to speak of. Gert Montmorency swayed upon the rickety stool of Mona's secondhand piano; *crash!* came the opening chords of "That's Why the Flying Fish Flew."

Out into Tompkins swelled the broiler chorus, supporting Belle DeLacy; the East Side was enjoying the most expensive musical comedy turn in New York, free gratis; youngsters on the sidewalk reveled in an all-too-rare gift of the gods, capering to the refrain. And the Broadway Speed-boy, dangling an orchid-swathed pink slipper, which he had forgotten to hurl after the departing pair, resolved that he would not flout the faintest streak of yellow. He caroled, slightly off key, with the others:

Nobody's home in Manhattan;

Nobody kisses like you.

On terra firma there's no place like Bur-

ma—

That's why the flying fish,

Fast little flying fish,

Fleet, flapping flying fish flew.

When Miss Montmorency got to the line, "Nobody kisses like you," she looked around

at Battersby meaningly. But she hadn't the slightest suspicion that the settlement chap had genuinely cut the Speed-boy out, or she would have died first. As Jack Battersby had informed the dusty trees in Tompkins Square, the night he tasted his bad medicine, marrying an earnestly anemic near-missionary, if an actually live spender were around the premises for roping and tying, wasn't done in broiler circles. It had looked to Gert merely as if Mona had made a bad toss with her lariat, and had quit. Hence the near-missionary; one picks up strange things on a rebound. Gert had done it herself; after a while Mona would be welcome to the Montmorency lore in the science of dropping them.

So, out of the Jollity's world, beyond the ken of the spender legion, passed Belle DeLacy's pet pony dancer. The check, for a thousand, that Battersby had tucked beneath the plush cover of the center-table, had been mailed back to him the moment Mr. and Mrs. Horace Rawlings returned from their three-day wedding journey. No note had accompanied it, although the envelope was addressed in Mona's stilt-like handwriting. Inferentially this meant "curtain" as far as Battersby was concerned; he cared too stingingly deeply not to accept the hint; none the less he felt that Horace had been foolish. It would not be easy for Mona, no matter how enthralled by the moment, to snip, with sudden scissors, all of the comforts of living.

Michael Halligan, as was imperative in the pursuit of his career, saw the Speed-boy now and then. Mrs. Rawlings was mentioned but once between them. This was when they were alone, in the most heavily curtained rear room of the Barking Dog, just before closing hour.

"They've taken a room in the Dyker Street tower; you know—under the electric cross," Halligan had remarked. "He's a hard worker—Horace. And they seem happy enough. But Mona's like her mother. She knows how to cover up. That was always Nora's way. I dunno, boy—I dunno. Shall I shake another Gibson?"

IT was a year from the following Christmas when the horoscope, so long cast, burgeoned into fulfillment. Gurley's had suspended the Speed-boy's red-ribboned holly wreaths and a veritable behemoth of mistletoe bunches.

Sometime later Hogi, the patient Nipponese manservant, regarded his master, breakfasting peckishly in silken dressing-robe. Battersby was oblivious of Hogi. Last night had been last night; this was this morning. He eyed daintily picked finnan haddie, and the complaining coffee-urn; staring a trifle further, he envisaged realization that it was only a matter of days when paying tellers would profess themselves unable to decipher his penmanship. It availed naught to reason how he had shoved fingers to the bottom of his pile. The precise point was that he had. *Salve atque vale!* Command of the spender legionaries was to pass into other hands. The Speed-boy was to be hung, gilt-framed, in the Spender Salon at last.

Upon ciphered note-paper, elbowing his coffee cup, he figured for a few minutes with the gold fountain pen. If Hogi understood, he gave no sign. This—and that—let's see—yes, with everything squared, there would be just about enough. He would make his exit gracefully; he would give a Christmas Eve party at Trittori's. Armand should have a valedictory *carte blanche*; Jake Minger, Cyril Blount, Belle DeLacy, Gert Montmorency, the Jollity broilers—now merged happily in a second Broadway musical comedy knock-out—all should come there after the performance.

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gear. And when it was dawn of the holiday, with a brimming beaker of Striped Seal in his grasp, he would tell them that he was going away from Broadway. He would bid them good-by—and God bless them! This wish would not come utterly amiss from an honest spender; at least he knew he had been that.

"Call Trit's," he said to Hogi. "Go as far as you like," he advised Armand. The *maitre d'hôtel* might have rubbed his palms, had not one of them been supporting the receiver. This would be a real Noël for Armand; he estimated the dimensions of Battersby largess, after a supper for fifty.

It was a rare Christmas Eve gathering; Gert Montmorency still talks about it in Number Six dressing-room. Not one of his guests could tell by the Speed-boy's face that anything untoward had happened. It seemed but an hour since the Jollity curtain had been rung down, when Belle DeLacy went to the window, parting the silver and blue drapery.

"It's daylight!" she cried. "As the scenario sob-sister would say: 'Rosy dawn breaks above the slumbering beast of Broadway.' Merry Christmas—everybody!"

"Hold on!" Battersby interrupted. "You're stealing my stuff. The Yuletide host of the occasion craves leave to make a few remarks. And then I'm going to ask you to drink a very special toast."

HE felt oddly quivery, wondering if he had been reckless with the Striped Seal. When had those exact words meant something else to him? Oh, yes! Mona Halligan had said them, the night she asked Armand to bring another glass, at the corner table downstairs. She was asleep, now, in that Dyker Street rookery, with the cross above the square dulling as morning split the East River mist.

Jake Minger was asleep too; Belle DeLacy was nudging him to listen.

"Once upon a time," Battersby began, "there was—"

At the door Armand was expostulating with a snow-powdered district messenger.

"Let the kid in!" called the Speed-boy. Then he saw that the boy had red hair. What clever jest of Fate was this—that Mona Halligan's brother should bring him some fellow-spender's telegram on his bankrupt Christmas morning?

"It's snowin' somethin' fierce, Mr. Battersby," said Number 7176. "I been on extra all night. This mistletoe duty aint no joke, I'll tell you."

Listlessly the Speed-boy tore open the yellow envelope and read. Then he lifted his glass and drained it; undeniably his hand was shaking.

"What's the glad tidings, Jack?" mumbled Jake Minger, drowsily.

"Can you beat it?" said Battersby; it was as if he were talking to himself, but quite distinctly. "Some one else has just left me four millions!"

He explored waistcoat pocket, drawing forth a new ten-dollar bill.

"Give it the once-over, everybody. For this started as a good-by party." He was laughing; and of course they didn't believe him. "That ten-spot was the last shot in my locker. I was saving it for Armand—a cheap-skate holiday tip, but all I had."

Another cork popped as he flipped the bank-note to Number 7176.

"Run along home, kid," he said. "And tell your sister—and Horace—that I'm going to send them a nice Christmas present, pronto."

"Horace!" the red-headed messenger boy exclaimed. "Then the old man was right—you didn't know! He told Mona so. Horace is dead—typhoid. The funeral was Friday."

The Speed-boy swayed uncertainly toward Cyril Blount's wife.

"Am I sober, Belle?" he asked. "Did you hear what I heard?"

"Yes, Jack."

The Jollity star was beside him, holding his arm. She was crying, softly.

"Us all—at Trit's—and Mona down there—alone?"

"She'll be needing a woman," whispered Belle DeLacy. "I'll go with you."

THE red-haired messenger followed them out of the room. Jake Minger was wide awake now. He coughed awkwardly.

"She can come back to the Jollity—at her own salary," he said. "But maybe she wont want to."

"We'll make her," said Gert Montmorency.

Armand was looping the blue and silver window hangings. It was broad daylight. The snow had stopped.

The expectant taxi-rank compared notes when it reassembled. It was the quietest break-up of a white-light Christmas party Trittori's had ever known. Manhattan's taxi-cohort is ever curious; it resents being baffled; and in time it understood.

Mona Halligan, however, is not to be seen in the front row of ponies who help Belle DeLacy to her nightly quota of encores. The Speed-boy saw to that. But it was all of six months before he went any farther. Yet it was strangely easy when he did. Mona did not misunderstand; and remarkable understanding of many things endowed, effortlessly, the ex-commander of the spender legion. Yes—Battersby had abdicated. Already he was becoming a myth, so truly a part of Broadway's ancient history that new legion recruits disputed whether a third or second cousin had willed him that farewell four million.

The Dyker Street Settlement dedicated a Mothers' Rest Pavilion last May, you may recall. The Charity Organization Society pronounces it the best-planned building of its kind in the world. A tablet above the entrance reads: "In loving memory of Nora Halligan and Horace Rawlings." When Michael Halligan passes, his hat comes off, and he wipes an eye with the back of the other hand. He misses the frail woman who slipped away before her time.

Battersby listened to the dedication exercises, standing in the last row. The auditorium downstairs had been too small for holding the mothers of Tompkins Square and many notables from the world of charity, the latter eager to appraise this last word in plants for social service. So they had put chairs in the unfinished nursery playroom that occupied the entire top floor—"One hundred per cent light and air," the architect had boasted.

DIMLY there came mention to the Speed-boy of "this munificent gift 'by an unknown donor." Equally dimly he saw Mona, hidden at the left of the temporary platform. Her eyes were searching for some one. Far past the drone of well-bred speakers' voices he peered; he peopled this sunny room with laughing children; he saw them come and go, with mothers who were a little less 'ired, a little more hopeful, because of the steel and brick shelter which a waster's million had conjured into being, almost overnight. With utter lack of logic, he saw jaded Nora Halligan among them. She was bending down to lift a girl baby from one of the white-enamelled cribs—and he knew who the girl baby was. Well—Nora Halligan's name was above the threshold. Even a waster's money could achieve no more.

"I was hoping you would come, even if you said you wouldn't," Mona told him afterward. No striped racing roadster had carried them back to the plush-furnished flat. They had walked. "And I'm keeping my promise. I sha'n't say 'Thank you'—not even once. But I'm going to say something else—you wont be angry if I do?"

"Try it on."
 "You're changed—in so many ways—in everything."
 "Am I?" asked the Speed-boy. "Wrong guess. Not in everything."

There was no elusiveness in her eyes now. But he did not know it; he had not dared to look into them.

HOGI was unable to ascertain what clothes should be laid out for that evening, although, with Oriental tact, he made persistent effort. Nor could he imagine why his master fumbled through an old lot of Talk-arola records, when the newest Broadway jingles were conveniently within reach.

Battersby was sitting chin in hand, listening to the Jollity star singing:

*Nobody's home in Manhattan;
 Nobody kisses like you.
 On terra firma there's no place like Bur-*

*ma—
 That's why the flying fish,
 Fast little flying fish,
 Fleet, flapping flying fish flew.*

The Speed-boy saw Belle DeLacy, in orange-slashed jet; but also he saw a slim broiler, third from right end, in the front row of pony dancers; toes and ankles were performing perfectly. It had been a year, and more, since a jazz fanfare greeted him in the haunts of the spender legionaries. He checked the record as Hogi beckoned toward the telephone.

"Did you mean it, Jack? That you hadn't changed—in everything?" Mona was asking.
 "Hold the wire!"

Battersby dragged the talking-machine cabinet over the rugs.

"Can you hear?" he called.

"Ye-es—it's 'The Flying Fish'—isn't it?"

"It's me," replied the Speed-boy, jettisoning grammatical purism. "All of me, Mona—and then some."

The lilt of the Jollity star tinkled in the ex-waster's overdone rooms as joyously as it had from behind the footlights:

*Flying fish, beat it from Rangoon,
 Beat it to far Mandalay.*

"Can you hear?" repeated Jack Battersby.

"I can hear Belle DeLacy," the voice from Tompkins Square answered. "Can you—hear me?"

*Loving's my game; it is my middle name;
 Tell her I'm coming to stay.*

The whirling disk proclaimed it jauntily.

"I'm listening, Mona."

"Well—aren't you—coming?"

Hogi, putting moonstone studs in a new evening shirt, heard the hall door slam. The "Mandalay Maid" record was still revolving. It ran down, with a screech, as he reversed the lever. Then he took the studs out.

What really puzzled Hogi was how these foreign devils could find anything amusing in Burma. Outside of the fact that the red ball of Nippon should float above it some day, to swell the Mikado's colonies, a descendant of the Samurai—whose notebooks on manners and customs of the Western Hemisphere were regarded, in Tokio, as models of content—could discover no rhyme or reason in a song about the honorable flying fish.

CHILDREN OF DIVORCE

(Continued from page 58)

She could not believe that anyone could be utterly devoid of sentiment. Had there been something in his life that had flamed up and left the ashes he was now offering her? Or perhaps at this moment he was in love with some one who interfered with his ambitions, whom he was relentlessly sacrificing. He was capable of that.

"Now, to be quite frank," he continued with a little hurried note in his voice, "—for otherwise all this would be rather ridiculous, an insult to your intelligence,—if I should ask you to marry me now, you would say no. You have not seen enough of life yet. You have not suffered as you are bound to suffer."

"I?"

"Was this a tentative proposal?"

"You are going to suffer deeply; for you have, unfortunately, Jean, a tremendous capacity for suffering. You have certain illusions that are going to be sacrificed, and the process is going to hurt you. There is going to come a moment of tremendous readjustment. At that time, remember what I have been saying. And remember this: the only one satisfying thing in the world is work. And when the joy of working for something worth-while can be shared with some one, then you have a happiness that is secure. Now let me tell you of my own ambitions."

Well-reasoned and timely warning! But even as he sat at her side expanding his worldly point of view, she had come to her decision. Her thoughts were not on this man who was self-sufficient, who would never waver from the path he had determined on, sure, sooner or later, to find the woman he needed to accelerate his progress—but of the other man, who could not stand without her, who needed her completely.

How little she had been of help! How negative had been her influence! She had done nothing but communicate to him all the fears which were a part of the settled inhibitions of her childhood, fear of life, fear of love, fear of happiness. What he needed

was faith and courage, and she had left him to fight his battle alone.

"I am quite frank in admitting that I need a certain amount of money back of me, to do what I want," the voice at her side continued.

Another voice inside her was crying:

"Ted, Ted, how stupid I have been! I love you, have loved you, and you always. You are my happiness, my only possible happiness in this world. For better or for worse, Ted, as it has always been, always will be for us—together."

She remembered how jealous Ted had been of the man at her side. She had an impulse, an illogical feminine impulse, to pay in kind this man who had aroused that jealousy.

"Victor," she said slowly, "all that you say I know has a great deal of truth in it, and though you have been careful to explain to me that this is only an impersonal discussion, I ought to tell you something. I have been in love all my life with one man. You know who it is. I am going to marry him."

Bombshell! The pipe dropped out of his fingers, but he caught himself immediately—on guard, retreating into his defenses.

"I realized all that. You will have to go through it; yes, I can see that. I am afraid, though, you are going to be very unhappy."

She thought a moment.

"I think if we want happiness, we ought to be willing to fight for it," she said finally. Then resentful of his prophecy: "There are things between us, traditions, loyalties, that you, from your rational point of view, would never understand."

He winced at this.

"You remember I told you you would have to suffer. You will be divorced in two years."

She sat up.

"You have completely misunderstood me if you think that. I loathe and detest the very idea of divorce! That is the one thing

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I will not admit in my life. If my marriage is a failure, it will be my own fault and I shall pay for it. No one else is going to suffer for my failure."

WHEN they returned to the house, she excused herself and ran upstairs to her room. Hesitations gone! Certainly come in a blinding revelation. In her own heart the feeling of a sacrament. She sat down and wrote him.

"My dear one:

"Come back to me—come as soon as you can, at any time, anywhere. I've made a dreadful mistake, and I know it now. I love you, dear, and you are the only thing in the world for me. I have failed so terribly to understand. But I'm not going to any more. I'm afraid of nothing, and nothing will be difficult, because I love you, Ted. With all my heart and soul I love you."

"Midnight.

"Jean."

She wrote it hurriedly, hardly seeing for the tears which dimmed her eyes, and when she had written it, she knelt down with a great feeling of happiness welling up in her, all doubts gone. And being at rest, she went off quickly into the first deep sleep she had known for weeks.

Chapter Twenty-three

THE next morning Jean sent the letter off to Ted's New York apartment, grudging the time which would still keep him from her. She felt such happiness pervading her whole being that she had a need of being alone. Others must see the light shining in her eyes. Others would question.

At three o'clock she ordered her car and went back to the city. Ted would not return for a day, two days perhaps, but she had need to be alone, reverently, rapturously alone with her happiness.

She would see no one until he came. For days she lived in ecstasy, never quitting her apartment, springing up at each sound of the telephone, running to it with the eagerness of a child. She lived with his photographs about her, queer shaggy boyish records, snapshots they had taken together; Ted at college in a football suit, on horseback, on the beach, in uniform—a whole book pasted full of them. She spent long hours reading over the record of years which she had kept in neat packages, boyish scrawls, letters from the Front. At night she lay smiling with her cheek on her bare arm, building up the future. . . .

But four days passed without word of him. She began to grow uneasy. Where could he be? Surely when he received her letter he would come to her instantly! No more misunderstandings were possible, after what she had written him. It could not be a question of pride now! Perhaps he tried to get her in the country. She telephoned her secretary. Mr. Larrabee had not telephoned. There was no letter there from him; all private correspondence had been forwarded. She thought of Kitty. Kitty might know. But when she telephoned the Arbutnots, Kitty was away—on some visit, the maid could not say where. She telephoned Mrs. Larrabee, under the pretext of thanking her verbally for things she had said to her. Mrs. Larrabee asked her immediately if she had news of Ted, a touch of restrained anxiety in her voice. No news there. What could have happened? At the end of the fourth day, frantic with uncertainty, Jean called up his apartment and spoke to his valet. He knew nothing. Mr. Larrabee had not been home for ten days—couldn't say where he was; the last orders

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had been to send some clothes to the Paxtons in Virginia. No, nothing since.

Five days, six: still no word of him. Her mind was tortured by terrible surmises.

She lay inertly in her bed, staring up at the pale open window, through which the muffled sounds of the city beat down on her numbed senses; a confusion of tiny sibilant sounds, shattering roar of the elevated railroad, foghorns in the distance. She fell at last into a troubled, dream-ridden sleep, a half-waking nightmare, from which she woke with a cry of terror. The telephone was ringing at her side, the clock marking the hour of three.

It could be only Ted! She seized the receiver. A voice she could not recognize was trying to make itself understood.

"Ted?"

"Hello."

Very faint.

"Is it you, Ted?"

"Jean!"

"Ted, I'm here—it's Jean!"

At last! Then clearly, distinctly she heard him cry:

"My God!"

"What is it, Ted? Are you in trouble? Where are you?"

"Got your letter." A pause. His voice sounded so shaken that she could hardly recognize it. "Jinny, I'm all in. I—"

She broke in hurriedly.

"But don't say any more! Come at once! Ted, dear, come at once to me!"

She jumped out of bed and hurriedly began to dress. She woke up her maid and told her to be in readiness. At last! At last! No matter what state he was in, she wanted him fiercely, wanted him weak at her knees, broken, to take into her arms, like a wayward child, to be hers, all hers, hers to redeem.

JEAN was waiting in the hall. She had the door open at the first sound of his step outside. He was without hat, hair tumbled, a coat-collar turned up over the disorder of his evening clothes. He stared at her, flung up his arms to ward her off, went by her in a dream, staggered into the sitting-room, sank into a chair; his head in his hands.

She came in, closing the door behind them and stood looking at him. His hand still held her letter twisted in it. She came nearer, saw that he was shaking all over.

"Ted, darling."

He looked up—an unrecognizable face.

"I'm drunk, drunk for days." His eyes fixed themselves foggily at some spot on the rug. "Things turning around me. You there, Jinny? What's it I got to say—something."

"Never mind now, dear."

"Wait." He stared at the letter twisted through his fingers. "Got it tonight—came back tonight." Then a cry from a soul in agony. "God, I've wrecked my life!"

She came and knelt near him.

"Why, Ted, your life isn't wrecked!" Something in her heart overflowing rushed up, filled her eyes with tears. "You've come back to me, that's all. We're together now, dear. Everything is all right. I love you so much."

At her words he sprang up, recoiling so violently that the chair in which he had been sitting went skidding over the floor.

"Why, Ted!"

She stood holding out her hand.

"Can't you guess?"

He cried it hoarsely, defending himself from her touch as though the contact would burn him. Guess! What could he mean? She opened her lips, but the words died on them. She stretched out her hand, a fluttering hand, in dumb entreaty. Again that wild, unseeing stare. Words, slow, terrifying, the end of all things.

"Jinny! I've been married—for days!"

Chapter Twenty-four

MARRIED? She refused to believe it. She looked at him apprehensively. He was in a dreadful state, on the verge of delirium tremens, haunted by fantastic dreams. "I'm going to take care of you, Ted," she said in a quiet voice. "Lie down on the sofa."

"Tricked me into it!" He frowned, staring dully at the whirling room. "But that's that!"

What nonsense he was talking—best to humor him!

"Well, then you were married—to whom?"

"Whom?" He appeared to reflect on the question. "Oh, yes—Kitty!"

"Who?"

He repeated it this time savagely, with an oath, flung up his arms and fell back into a chair.

"No, no, Ted, you don't know what you're saying. It can't be!" She put out her hand as though to recall his words, stood still, rooted to the spot, seized with a sudden cold, the gripping, clammy chill of realization.

Married—Ted and Kitty married!

"Drunk, been drunk for days, drunk now," he said thickly from the sofa with an attempt at dignity. "Wild, desperate. Married! Done for!" He began to laugh.

"Funny! Damn' funny! What's the use? Better get a doctor, quick! I'm all in."

"Yes, a doctor, of course." She heard strange sounds on her lips. She forgot herself, the self that had suddenly ended a moment ago. She thought: "Something dreadful is going to happen, if I don't act quickly and keep my nerve."

"Lie back, Ted. It's all right. I'll take care of you."

He looked up at her, striving to distinguish her in the foggy room, and suddenly his frame sunk in a collapse.

"It isn't safe to leave him a moment," she thought.

She went quickly to a desk and wrote on a piece of paper: "Telephone Doctor Lawrence. Come at once. Bring bromide. Delirium tremens." She rang and passed the paper through the door when her maid arrived all in a flutter. "Be quick! Telephone number on list."

She came back, turned the key in the door, and sat down near him.

"Let go yourself, Ted—it's better."

"Who's that?"

"It's Jinny. I'm here."

"Thank God!"

He began to rage against himself, against the trick that had caught him, cursing himself, weak one moment, wild the next, and through the incoherent, passionate outbursts, her imagination reconstructed the tragedy.

The growing dissipation since the night of his arrest, the brooding and bitterness of his mood, a feeling that everybody was against him. Then a fog—days and nights lost in his memory. Where had he been, what had he done? Into what hidden, terrible corners of the underworld had he wandered? Days lost and unrecognizable. A chance meeting with Charley Lancaster, Kitty, another woman—Clarice Coster, perhaps. Kitty with her hand in his—a woman, one of his own kind at last, out of the phantasmagoria of sleepless nights and days of stupor. Strange! Some one who cared for him, told him so, by his side, arm in arm, ministering to him. A dinner of four, more drinks, champagne, lots of champagne, swift reaction from black despair, artificial reaction, a reckless gaiety.

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"Kitty—you blind old bat—Kitty, of course."

"Kitty?"

An idea penetrating a foggy intelligence—incredulous.

"What—Kitty?"

Then the dare. Again Charley Lancaster, laughing uproariously, great joker.

"Kitty, I dare you."

A burst of laughter. Kitty all at once frightened and silent. A wild suggestion for a foggy intelligence.

"How 'bout it? Take a chance, Kitty?"

Kitty's eyes on his, shining, defiant.

"Do you mean it?"

"Sure I mean it."

"Tonight?"

"Tonight!"

No chance to sober up, no chance for reflection, a taunt, all on a gamble, champagne in the veins, black despair in the background. Done! A sudden jumping up from the table, everyone laughing, highly excited—wonderful idea, glorious lark! Quick, across the river into New Jersey—hilarious ride, Kitty against his side, soft, pretty, yielding. A sleepy justice of the peace, routed out of bed, barefooted and disheveled, scenting a fat fee. A few words half understood, a few words, easy as that, no trouble at all—a few words, irrevocably spoken and the jest completed! Married!

FROM the incoherent phrases Jean reconstructed it all, piecing together unrelated wanderings of his tortured imagination, understanding only too well what had been behind it all, understanding Kitty now, many things about Kitty of the past. She had no time to think. He was on his feet, maddened again by the recurring realization, determined on desperate expedients, determined on flight. But Jean stood before him, as determinedly blocking the way.

"Don't, Ted. It's no use, the door is locked!"

"Locked? Who's locked the door?"

He began to rage, vowing he would break through everything, made frantic by opposition.

"I've locked the door. I have the key, Ted."

He laughed. Huge joke!

"Why, I'll take that key from you as easy—as easy—"

She stood her ground. No thought of fear. Knowledge of her power over him.

"Of course, Ted, you can take it from me just as easily as you could break me in your hands. I know that." He was almost on her, but she did not flinch. "But I know also, Ted, that you *won't* lay your hands on me."

Long, dangerous moment, her eyes on his eyes.

"My God, Jinny, touch you! Never!"

"Lie down now, Ted." A long breath, triumphant, but trembling. "You're not yourself tonight. Tomorrow we'll clear up everything."

"What's that?"

"I want you to trust me."

He yielded, lay down. She placed her cool hand on his forehead, spoke to him in a low voice, checking him gently when he thrashed about, kept him still until Doctor Lawrence arrived, put him to bed and administered a bromide.

IT was eight o'clock. She had another duty to perform—a duty to herself. She went to the telephone and called up Kitty.

"Who's that—you, Ted?"

The anxious voice of a woman who had been waiting for hours by the side of the telephone.

"It's I, Jean."

A long silence. Then defiantly:

"Well, what do you want?"

"I want you to come over right away."

"Oh, so you know!"

"I know."

"Well, I don't think I care to come."

"Ted is here."

Jean could divine the other's astonishment, the quick gasp of fear. "He's been here for hours. He's in a dreadful state—you must come."

Another endless silence.

"Do you hear me? Do you understand the situation?"

"Oh, yes, I understand a lot."

"Will you come?"

"I'll think it over."

The sound of the receiver hung up.

Chapter Twenty-five

KITTY arrived at last, late in the afternoon, as Jean knew she would, frightened and defiant. She came a little way into the room, put out her hand to a chair to steady herself, looked at Jean with a weak attempt at bravado.

"Well, I suppose he's still here?"

"Yes."

"Why should he come to you, I'd like to know?"

Jean looked at her, saw under the fear and jealousy in her eyes, the havoc that long waiting and suffering had brought.

"That isn't the important thing, Kitty," she said wearily.

"I suppose you know everything!"

"Yes, all that is necessary." Jean thought a moment. What would be the good of reproaches now? Would that change anything? "You've married him. I only want to know one thing." She came nearer, her eyes searching deep into the glance that wavered under hers, fell away. "Kitty!" She took her by the shoulders. "Kitty— You do love him?"

Kitty sprang away, freeing herself nervously.

"You think I stole him from you, of course!"

Jean shook her head.

"I'm not in question. Ted was free to do what he wanted. You know that. Kitty, I only want to know that you didn't do this just to get married. I want to know that you really love him!"

She swung about, met the accusation in Jean's look, flung out hysterically:

"I've always loved him—*always*, do you hear?" She stamped her foot, tears of rage in her eyes. "I'd have married him any time, anyhow, anyway I could get him. I've stood aside and waited." Handkerchief angrily dashed across her eyes, jealousy leaping out. She went to the window, stood with her back turned. "I don't see what right you have to reproach me after you've thrown him over—because I care enough to pick him up."

"You're right, Kitty. You had the courage—I hadn't." She held out her hand. "All that I want to do now is to help you both."

"I don't want your help." Kitty, with clenched fists, advanced on her. "He's my husband, and I want him out of here."

"I don't think you realize how serious the situation is. You had better listen to me. I want to talk to you calmly and without any bitterness, believe me. Sit down."

"I don't want to talk. I want to know why he came here to you?"

"Yes, you have a right to know that now." She thought a moment, said quietly:

"I wrote him a letter asking him to come back to me. Days ago. He found the letter last night. That is why he came."

All the bravado dropped from Kitty; she sank down into a chair, panic-stricken. Kitty frightened, Kitty thinking quickly, too intelligent not to see the danger. "What's he going to do?" she said at last in a whisper.

"There's only one thing for him to do,

Kitty. He'll do it." Jean went to her side. "Kitty, you must have a public wedding right away."

Kitty gave a gasp, caught her hand, clung to it, began to cry.

"Jean, how you must hate me!"

"No, I don't hate you. I want to try and save the situation. It's a dreadful mess, dear. He might have done anything last night, in his condition. I had to keep him—I really had to."

"Jinny, you'll stand by me!"

"That's all I'm thinking of." She laid her hand on her shoulder. "Kitty, you've taken an awful risk. You must make him happy. You've got to do that now. You've got to love him a lot. If you don't, anything may happen."

At that moment Ted came in. Kitty gave a cry, sprang up, ran to him with outstretched arms.

"Ted, I have been so frightened! I love you so!"

He stopped her with a look.

"Please—I'm quite sober now!"

"Ted!"

He turned at Jean's voice, looked from one to the other, said deliberately:

"You don't think I'm going on with it, do you?"

Kitty fell back as though she had received a blow. Jean came forward, caught his arm.

"Ted, it's true. She's always loved you. She did it to save you. She's your wife now. You're going to stand by her."

"Thank you for nothing!" Kitty, humiliated, burst into tears of rage. "Jean Waddington, I'll never forgive you for that—never, as long as I live!"

And so out.

They heard the outer door slam, stood looking at each other. There was a long blank silence.

HE drew his hand weakly across his forehead and sat down.

"That's what it would mean, Jinny."

"Wait."

She went to the window, her hand clinging to the curtains, striving to see her way clear. A harder battle this, a battle against his heart and hers. She came back, sat down opposite.

"Let's try to be fair, Ted. Kitty wasn't herself. Put yourself in her place. She was wild with jealousy at the thought of your coming here, turning to me. Any woman would have acted as she did."

He looked at her, grim and resolved.

"So you want me to go on with it?"

She nodded.

"Well, I won't. Do you call it a marriage when you don't know what you're doing?" he asked.

"Didn't you?"

"No, I didn't."

"Ted!"

"I'll be damned if I did!"

"If you hadn't got my letter, you would have gone on."

He seized eagerly on her tactical blunder. "I left her two days ago. I told her I'd never live with her! Did I know, then, you had changed your mind? Had that anything to do with it?"

"I was wrong."

"Of course you're wrong. Would you marry a man you didn't love? Why do you want to drive me into it, then?"

"There's so much that's good in Kitty. Don't forget that she saw you going to the devil and jumped in to save you. She'd never have done that if she hadn't loved you, Ted. She must have her chance!"

"Jinny, everything in me is crying out for you! You ask me to go to another woman? It's unthinkable!"

For the first time she could not meet his look.

"I'm thinking of you, too, Ted. It's not



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entirely Kitty. It's for your own sake. People aren't going to speak of you as a cad. I'm sorry, but that's what they'd say. Only you and I are to blame. We're not going to throw it off on some one else, are we?"

"Look here, Jean, I'll keep my mouth shut, and later she can get a divorce. Why not? Wont that fix things up? There's nothing sacred in marriage nowadays. Everyone divorces. No one need know the circumstances. I've fifteen thousand a year. She can have every cent of it. Why not? Why sacrifice two lives when no good'll come out of it?"

She shook her head.

"You mean you wouldn't marry me, now?"

"No, Ted, I would not."

"You mean it?"

"You know I do."

"Yes, you do." He flung his arms in a gesture of defeat. "It's your damned obsession! Yes, you'll sacrifice everything for that. But it isn't as though we'd been really married, Jean. Can't you admit any case? Even when there're no children involved?"

"Her good name is involved. You can't keep such a thing as this a secret. If you throw her over, everyone would know. No woman could stand up against such a scandal. And you are responsible, Ted, you are!"

"So I'm to be the scapegoat?"

"Oh, Ted, that's not fair!"

"Yes, it is," he said doggedly. "I'm fighting for my happiness. That's just what it means—nothing else. Throwing my life away."

"There's no easy way out." Very straight, very determined, she stood up to him. "It's a choice of evils. Cowardice is the worst. It's your self-respect."

He shrugged his shoulders.

"What's the use of saying any more, Jean?"

She studied him, saw the weakness and the sullen defiance in his nerve-racked body, was afraid.

"I want you to give me a promise, Ted."

"I won't give you any promise, Jean."

"I ask it because I love you with all my heart and soul. Yes, even now—always, Ted." She said it passionately, all reserve thrown to the winds. "I love you, I love you, oh, you cannot know how I love you! It's all my fault. I've brought all on you; I know it. I blame myself." She pressed her hands suddenly over her heart. "Ted, do it for my sake, to make it easier for me. Ted, I want to be proud of you."

His answer was a groan.

"My God, Jean, you'll drive me wild!"

HOURS and hours of this, going over and over the same arguments, imploring her frantically, furiously, weakly, with tears in his eyes, knowing all the time he would do as she wished in the end.

At last, when they were both physically and nervously exhausted, the storm subsided in him; capitulation—weariness.

"Well, you ask it. I guess you can make me do anything, Jinny. When I get hold of—I hope to God you won't have this on your conscience—when I get hold of myself—tell her I'll go through with it. Other men have gone through with such things, I guess. Suppose I can. But, O God, Jean, how—how utterly unnecessary it is!"

"You must have a public wedding, Ted dear, small, if you want. If she wants, I'll be there. I'll be a friend to both of you, always. I'll always try to help."

He got up.

"Oh, anything you want. What difference does it make? Well, Jean, guess this time it's good-by. No, no, don't cry. I'm not strong enough for that."

She brushed the tears from her eyes.

"I'm going to believe in you always, Ted."

He looked down at her thoughtfully.

"I've brought it on myself. I won't duck it." He stopped. "So it's good-by."

He said it as though listening to a faint, far-off sound, drew a long breath and looked at her, at the pale face with the great dark eyes, shining out at him. He stood a moment so, wavering, suffocating, with an intolerable desire to clutch her to him, to have her a last time in his arms, close.

"Good-by."

She heard him go, put out her hand, felt the touch of the divan and sank on it inertly, tired, staring at the ceiling, knowing that the sleep of exhaustion would soon come mercifully to postpone the long waking agony of the morrow.

Chapter Twenty-six

MISS FINGALL, in her perusal of the society notes of the Paris *Herald* suddenly came to an attentive pause before the announcement, "Miss Jean Waddington has arrived from New York to visit her cousin, the Countess Kittery."

The faded Louis XV mirrors of the low Pompadour bedroom gave back the reflection of a little old lady decked out in a lace morning-cap with rosebud trimmings, propped up in a panner bed among a heap of pink pillows.

At her summons Euphemie, her maid, brought in the "Social Register," which the mistress consulted with increasing interest.

"Jean Waddington—that must be Leonard Waddington's daughter. Here it is. Just as I thought. 'Waddington, Leonard M. Mr. and Mrs.' Miss Waddington separate address. Humph. Only child by first marriage. Parents divorced. Mrs. Chastaine the mother. Father died year and a half ago. I remember now. Estate of grandfather passed to her in trust. The Waddington millions. Countess Kittery must be a second cousin on the mother's side then. Well, well! How extraordinary! Just at the right moment, too. Providential, I call it. I've seen a photograph of her somewhere lately. Now, where was it?"

She descended gingerly from the bed, enveloping her bony body in a filmy negligee that would have done honor to Mlle. Calci at the opera, and went eagerly into the tiny golden sitting-room of her low *entresol* four-room apartment on the Quai de Conti, facing the Seine and the Louvre. Besides knowing her Brett's "Peerage," her "Almanac de Gotha" and her "Social Register," Miss Fingall did an extensive reading among those magazines which visualize the parade of society. After a few moments' diligent search, she came upon a page entitled "Society Takes in Polo," and discovered the object of her interest in a group of the younger set.

"Trim figure, knows how to wear her clothes, at least," she thought. "May or may not be pretty. Hard to tell from a snapshot. However, the money's there. I know all about that! I'll drop in on the Countess Kittery this afternoon."

She returned to her bedroom and began the elaborate preparations for her toilet.

Miss Theresa Fingall was one of the mysteries of that international society which hides its many mysteries in a tolerant Paris.

How did she live? Paris is a curious place, with strange professions unknown to a younger metropolis. There are all sorts of commissions to be picked up by those in touch with wealthy Americans in doubt where to shop. Ten per cent at a jeweler's in the Rue de la Paix, at a fashionable picture-dealer's or the best dressmakers, is so established a custom that no one marvels any more.

Then there are other legitimate sources of brokerage open to a few, a very few, with the best social connections. Rightly or

wrongly, Miss Fingall was credited with having been the intermediary in more than one important international alliance.

AT five o'clock, then, of that delicious evening in April, Miss Fingall took a taxi, crossed the Tuileries gardens, now in full leaf, ascended the Champs Elysées, alive with the invading hordes of international visitors, and arrived at a small private dwelling in the Avenue du Bois de Boulogne quarter with all the zest of a connoisseur on the track of a rare bibelot. She dined once or twice a year at the Kitterys' (the Count was of the best diplomatic circles, now semi-retired after many choice posts in His Majesty's service), enough to remember the butler by name and to be remembered with a greeting.

The Countess Kittery, a buxom, healthily good-looking woman of thirty-odd, was waiting in the drawing-room.

"You are going out?" said Miss Fingall, perceiving the hat.

"On the contrary, I've just come in."

"How fortunate! There is no tea like yours in all Paris—*specialité de la maison!*"

The Countess smiled, pleased at this recognition of the beverage which was imported at fabulous prices from China.

"It's mild enough to have it in the garden, don't you think?"

"I think it would be adorable. And your lovely children—everyone is talking about the Orpen portrait, quite the most charming thing in the Salon."

The children, a boy and a girl, who were sailing boats in the formal French garden, came up as the two ensconced themselves under a red and white umbrella, and curtsied diffidently, standing there as though not quite sure whether this little old lady who came in on a cane was a good or bad fairy. Presently a slim figure in white came down the marble steps and joined them.

"My cousin, Miss Waddington."

Miss Fingall acknowledged the introduction pleasantly, but without more than a polite interest, too astute to show her hand. But all at once interrupting herself, after a few moments of social banalities, she said:

"Did I catch the name right? It is Miss Waddington, isn't it? Are you by chance related to Leonard Waddington?"

"He was my father."

"Then Mrs. Chastaine is your mother?"

"Yes."

"How extraordinary! My dear, I knew your grandfather, Ned Tremaine, intimately. In fact, I was quite smitten with him when I was a girl—that, my dear, was a long time ago. Your grandfather was a very distinguished and charming man, quite the beau of Baltimore. Forgive my staring at you, but really it is extraordinary."

All the while she had been thinking: "Why, the girl is a beauty! What an air she has! Where does she get that dignity and repose? No jewelry, very good form, very distinguished. With such a face and such a fortune—it must be ten millions at the least—she can marry anyone! A great match, a very great match!"

THERE was a clamor from the children, and Jean flitted away to restore peace.

"How refreshing to see a modern young girl who is not loaded down with jewelry! Very good taste—very good form. Your cousin will have an enormous success here."

"She is very quiet in her tastes."

"A little serious for her age?"

"Her childhood has been unhappy—with both parents remarried, you know."

"Une affaire de cœur?"

"Perhaps."

"I can't see her as the wife of the typical American business man."

"She doesn't seem in any hurry to marry," said the Countess Kittery, smiling.

Miss Fingall did not pursue the subject,



Seven doctors out of ten said laxatives are harmful

IN a recent coast-to-coast investigation we asked doctors the plain question: "Do you consider the continued use of cathartics and laxatives harmful?"

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and presently, having learned that Miss Wadlington's stay was indefinite, she departed.

"What a strange little old witch!" said Jean, to whom the children had been confiding their doubts.

"She knows everyone. Everyone is a little afraid of her. Her sister is the Duchess of Ankaster, you know. She lives in a tiny little apartment and exists on no one knows what. But she is quite a social power. She can present you in the best of French circles if she wants to."

"What an extraordinary false front that was! Imagine straw-colored hair at her age! With her hooked nose and squinting eyes, I don't wonder she can be very terrifying."

"If you want a title, my dear," said the Countess, laughing, "Miss Fingall will arrange it for you."

"Really?"

"So they say. She is probably examining her list of eligibles now."

Jean shrugged her shoulders.

(The Countess Kittery had not been mistaken. Miss Fingall, who did not lack energy, on leaving them had driven directly to the Rue de Grenelle, and crossing a magnificent courtyard of pure Louis XIV traditions, had sent up her card, on which she had penciled "*très importante*" to her old friend Caroline, Princesse de Sfax. A woman of decision and energy, Miss Fingall.)

A YEAR and a half had passed since Ted Larrabee's marriage to Kitty Flanders, and during that time Jean had buried her memories and painfully reconstructed her life. She had suffered as only such natures can suffer, who give nothing of themselves lightly, and give completely only after long hesitation and with great difficulty. Having immolated Larrabee in her rigid Scotch sense of duty, she had immolated herself. At first she had convinced herself that she would never marry; it was only just that this should be her part of sacrifice. Besides, the heartache and depression through which she had passed had in it such poignant agony that the very thought of again loving filled her with incredulity.

She had stoically drunk her cup of bitterness and gone to the small private wedding which had taken place ten days later. Kitty was too astute to make opposition. They had even gone through the forms of an outward reconciliation which at bottom deceived neither.

For a few months Jean flung herself feverishly into the management of her fortune, acquainted herself with the opportunities for service before her, better tenements, playgrounds in the slums, hospitals and musical settlements. But after months of concentrated energy, she confessed to herself all her labor brought her no peace. To bury the past, to build up a new self, she felt the need of a complete change of scene. A chance meeting with the Countess Kittery, a cousin on her mother's side, had been followed by an invitation. She had seized the opportunity avidly, gratefully, with a feeling of weary relief to close the door finally on remembered scenes and end the constant comedy of indifference when in her heart the ache was still acute.

The effect on her of Paris, not the Paris of her cosmopolitan set, but the Paris of the people, was twofold: it dwarfed her sense of the value of her own individuality, and at the same time gave it a new feeling of liberation. She even began to acquire the

comforting impersonality of a curious and interested onlooker. The society into which she entered was a society of men of wit and manners, who discussed with mental agility and toleration of opinions, ideas on which she acknowledged to her surprise she had not even meditated. A brilliant panorama, full of surface lights and colors, which at first acquaintance fascinated and awoke her mind.

Her cousin Bettina, Countess Kittery, interested her enormously. Here was a woman of her own kind who had done what a year ago she had considered incomprehensible: married ambitiously, and apparently made a success of her marriage. Was she really happy? How happy? To what extent was her life a compromise? If she herself should marry, could she do the same?

Had Bettina been of an inquisitive nature Jean would have withdrawn into her shell, but as she recognized her reticence, as the weeks passed she became eager to discuss in the confidence of intimacy thoughts which were germinating in her imagination.

ONE day, when alone in the garden the conversation had turned on the marriages of their friends. Jean said suddenly: "You know, of all the homes I have been in, yours is to me the happiest."

"It has turned out well."

Bettina said it pensively, reflectively, looking backward over the years.

"Do you mind if—" She hesitated. The Countess laughingly laid her hand on her arm.

"You want to know if it was a love-match? Have I guessed it?"

Jean's blush accused her. She felt that before she could ask a confidence, she should be willing to give one.

"Bettina dear, it isn't just curiosity. I am fighting out a lot of things. I—I have been through some black days."

"I've heard rumors."

"I made a mess of my life—his too. I was very young, very intolerant." She stopped, frowned. To her surprise, she found her eyes clouded with tears and speech difficult. "Some of it I can tell you; some of it is his secret. It's all terribly sad—terribly unnecessary."

"I guessed a good deal. You feel these things, don't you? Tell me what you want to and when you want to."

"Some day, yes, I think—I know I shall." She looked up at her cousin with a grateful wavering smile. "I don't think I could just now. The point is, I don't want to be a coward and give up. So you see I am—well, sort of starting to build up again, to work out a point of view. I shall never love again," she said hastily. "I don't want ever to love again."

"No, my dear, I don't think you ever will."

She said it gravely with a certain gentleness. "But are you sure you do not still love him?"

"Bettina, how can I when he belongs to another woman?"

"Child!"

She dissembled her amazement at the artless candor of the young girl's exclamation. Not very modern, such a point of view!

"THERE is no secret about my life," Bettina began, laying down the embroidery on which she was working. "I don't know, Jean, whether it will be much help to you. Our natures are different, and it is our natures rather than our theories which determine our lives. I lived a great deal abroad, and I was brought up in a large family, somewhat of a tomboy. Brothers, cousins, loads of young men—I had a great deal of such comradeship, and in such friendships you give always a little of your heart. I never really passed through a sentimental age. I don't think I have ever loved anyone as I loved my father, and after him Ronnie, my oldest brother who died."

Jean looked up at her, startled by the

Beatrice Grimshaw

has written one of the most picturesque of all her finely imaginative stories for this magazine. Watch for "The House of the Black-eyed Susans" in an early issue.

frankness of this avowal, seeing which her cousin smiled.

"That is what, of course, you want to know. My happiness puzzles you. You want to know the secret."

"You make me feel very impertinent."

"No, no. I am only teasing you a little. Did I marry Hugh because I loved him so that I couldn't help it? No. I chose my partner; I did not surrender. As for Hugh, he cares for me as much as he is capable of caring for any woman. But I am, I always have been, second to his career. I like that in him, rather respect him for a certain authority it gives him over me. We married as a good sporting proposition. I went into it with my eyes open. It opened up to me an interesting life, full of color, change, unusual experiences, contact with men who are doing big things. He has never failed me in respect or in deference, and he has quietly exacted the same from me. We have differed. But he has always treated me as one gentleman to another. He is the best companion I could possibly desire. If I had to do it over again, I should do it with enthusiasm."

"But, Bettina, you do love him!"

"Don't misunderstand me. I have a deep affection for him as for the best friend in my life. There is no sacrifice I would not make for him. I can conceive of falling desperately in love with another man, but I would sacrifice him, not Hugh. You are too young to understand that. I admire him tremendously, respect him more, and after ten years, that is a good deal to say, isn't it?"

"I wonder," Jean said irrelevantly, pensively.

"You wonder if you could do the same?"

"But, Bettina, supposing you or he had fallen in love? You can't always control that, can you?"

"No."

BETTINA considered, feeling the vast difference in experience intervening between them, wondering how far it was wise to go. "Oh, I've had little flurries now and then. Lots of men have made love to me. One or two—but it has always been a question of values. I knew the value of my happiness. That was all there was to it," she added enigmatically. "I'm afraid, my dear, that there is a very little of the romantic left in the modern woman." She looked at her cousin and smiled again. "You are a little against your times. Aren't you a little mid-Victorian?"

"I was."

"You have been all shut up in yourself with a great need of giving out; and though, of course, you have been in contact with lots of people, you haven't given much of your intimate self, I should say. Every friend we have and like is a little of a compromise with our convictions. I am not clever enough to have thought that out. But it's true. You've had few, very few friends—that's why you've remained rather uncompromising—uncompromising for these days."

"That is so," Jean said in a low voice.

"That's also why you have needed a great love more than anything else in the world. It's your nature, my dear, to be so, and we can't escape our natures."

"I used to be that way." She thought it over reflectively. "I don't feel so now. I am changing tremendously. I feel it."

"I wonder."

What she was really wondering was what would happen when her friend met Larrabee again.

The next of the generous installments into which we have divided this fine novel brings it to a situation of special interest. Be sure to read it in our forthcoming February issue.



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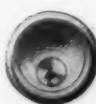
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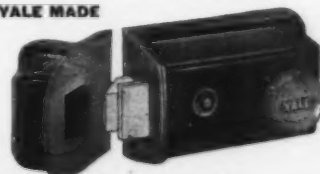
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How different it was before vaccination was discovered. Then mothers were powerless against this terrible disease. Among children who died, under 10 years of age, smallpox was responsible for one out of three deaths. Smallpox was more prevalent than measles. Few escaped and the children suffered most. Over and over again it swept the world, leaving its thousands of dead, thousands cruelly disfigured, thousands blind and deaf.

Then came the history-changing discovery—vaccination—and the number of deaths from smallpox went down and down. The end would have been reached but for the well-meaning, but misinformed persons who clamored that "vaccination is a crime"—that "sunshine and cleanliness, not vaccination, drive out smallpox".

If such reckless statements are believed and parents do not have their children

vaccinated, smallpox may again attack the children as it did a little more than a century ago. In certain parts of the country, smallpox among children is again on the increase!

In the past, when arm to arm inoculation was common and persons were inoculated direct from smallpox patients, there were many deaths following attempts at prevention. Today, vaccination is safe. The only mishaps that can occur are due to carelessness in protecting the vaccinated area. The vaccine now used is produced under the control and supervision of the United States Government.

Smallpox comes from unsuspected sources. Because it takes 12 days to develop, it is possible for immigrants or returning travellers to bring smallpox into the country with them.

Smallpox can be stamped out only by systematic vaccination. Every child should be vaccinated before he is one year old and again during school years. Immunity wears off in time—anywhere from five to fifteen years—and leaves one again susceptible. Is it more than seven years since you were vaccinated?

Now—before the danger is upon you—make sure that you and yours are properly protected. Be safe.

Before the Philippine Islands were occupied by the American Army in 1898, thousands of persons died from smallpox every year. Vaccination carried on under the direction of Army officials drove smallpox down to only 273 deaths in one year.

Then came a period when vaccination of children was neglected. As a result, the worst epidemic of modern times broke out in 1918-19 with 60,855 deaths—75 per cent of which were of children under 9 years of age.

Our 48 states can be classified in three groups—those in which vaccination is compulsory, those in which it is optional and those which have no laws for vaccination.

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